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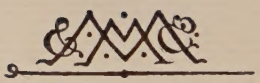

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TORONTO

OLIVER CROMWELL

BY

JOHN VISCOUNT MORLEY

O.M., P.C.

HONORARY FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD

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NOTE.

EVERYBODY who now writes about Cromwell must, apart from old authorities, begin by grateful acknowledgment of his inevitable debt to the devoted labours of Mr. Gardiner, our master historian of the seventeenth century. Hardly less is due in this special province to the industry and discernment of Mr. Firth, whose contributions to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, as well as his editions of memoirs and papers of that age, show him, besides so much else, to know the actors and the incidents of the Civil Wars with a minute intimacy commonly reserved for the things of the time in which a man actually lives.

If I am asked why then need I add a new study of Oliver to the lives of him now existing from those two most eminent hands, my apology must be that I was committed to the enterprise (and I rather think that some chapters had already appeared) before I had any idea that these heroes of research were to be in the biographic field. Finding myself more than half way

across the stream, I had nothing for it but to persevere with as stout a stroke as I could to the other shore.

Then there is the brilliant volume of my friend of a lifetime, Mr. Frederic Harrison. By him my trespass will, I know, be forgiven on easy terms; for the wide compass of his attainments as historian and critic, no less than his observation of the living world's affairs, will have long ago discovered to him that any such career and character as Cromwell's, like one of the great stock arguments of old-world drama, must still be capable of an almost endless range of presentment and interpretation.

July 1900.

In revising this edition, I have added one or two notes on points raised in Mr. Gardiner's generous criticism of my book (*Contemporary Review*) at the time of its first appearance.

J. M.

April 1904.

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BOOK I.

(1599-1642)

PROLOGUE.

THE figure of Cromwell has emerged from the floating mists of time in many varied semblances, from blood-stained and hypocritical usurper up to transcendental hero and the liberator of mankind. The contradictions of his career all come over again in the fluctuations of his fame. He put a king to death, but then he broke up a parliament. He led the way in the violent suppression of bishops, he trampled on the demands of presbytery, and set up a state system of his own; yet he is the idol of voluntary congregations and the free churches. He had little comprehension of that government by discussion which is now counted the secret of liberty. No man that ever lived was less of a pattern for working those constitutional charters that are the favourite guarantees of public rights in our century. His rule was the rule of the sword. Yet his name stands first, half warrior, half saint, in the calendar of English-speaking democracy.

A foreign student has said that the effect a written history is capable of producing is nowhere seen more strongly than in Clarendon's story of the Rebellion. The view of the event and of the most

conspicuous actors was for many generations fixed by that famous work. Not always accurate in every detail, and hardly pretending to be impartial, yet it presented the great drama with a living vigour, a breadth, a grave ethical air, that made a profound and lasting impression. To Clarendon Cromwell was a rebel and a tyrant, the creature of personal ambition, using religion for a mask of selfish and perfidious designs. For several generations the lineaments of Oliver thus portrayed were undisturbed in the mind of Europe. After the conservative of the seventeenth century came the greater conservative of the eighteenth. Burke, who died almost exactly two centuries after Cromwell was born, saw in him one of the great bad men of the old stamp, like Medici at Florence, like Petrucci at Siena, who exercised the power of the State by force of character and by personal authority. Cromwell's virtues, says Burke, were at least some correctives of his crimes. His government was military and despotic, yet it was regular; it was rigid, yet it was no savage tyranny. Ambition suspended, but did not wholly suppress, the sentiment of religion and the love of an honourable name. Such was Burke's modification of the dark colours of Clarendon. As time went on, opinion slowly widened. By the end of the first quarter of last century reformers like Godwin, though they could not forgive Cromwell's violence and what they thought his apostasy from old principles and old allies, and though they had no sympathy with the biblical religion that was the mainspring of his life, yet were inclined to

place him among the few excellent pioneers that have swayed a sceptre, and they almost brought themselves to adopt the glowing panegyrics of Milton.

The genius and diligence of Carlyle, aided by Macaulay's firm and manly stroke, have finally shaken down the Clarendonian tradition. The reaction has now gone far. Cromwell, we are told by one of the most brilliant of living political critics, was about the greatest human force ever directed to a moral purpose, and in that sense about the greatest man that ever trod the scene of history. Another powerful writer of a different school, holds that Oliver stands out among the very few men in all history who, after overthrowing an ancient system of government, have proved themselves with an even greater success to be constructive and conservative statesmen. Then comes the honoured historian who has devoted the labours of a life to this intricate and difficult period, and his verdict is the other way. Oliver's negative work endured, says Gardiner, while his constructive work vanished, and his attempts to substitute for military rule a better and a surer order were no more than 'a tragedy, a glorious tragedy.' As for those impatient and importunate deifications of Force, Strength, Violence, Will, which only show how easily hero-worship may glide into effrontery, of them I need say nothing. History, after all, is something besides praise and blame. To seek measure, equity, and balance, is not necessarily the sign of a callous heart and a mean understanding. For the thirst after broad classifications works havoc with truth; and to insist

upon long series of unqualified clenchers in history and biography only ends in confusing questions that are separate, in distorting perspective, in exaggerating proportions, and in falsifying the past for the sake of some spurious edification of the present.

Of the Historic Sense it has been truly said that its rise indicates a revolution as great as any produced by the modern discoveries of physical science. It is not, for instance, easy for us who are vain of living in an age of reason, to enter into the mind of a mystic of the seventeenth century. Yet by virtue of that sense even those who have moved furthest away in belief and faith from the books and the symbols that lighted the inmost soul of Oliver, should still be able to do justice to his free and spacious genius, his high heart, his singleness of mind. On the political side it is the same. It may be that 'a man's noblest mistake is to be before his time.' Yet historic sense forbids us to judge results by motive, or real consequences by the ideals and intentions of the actor who produced them.

The first act of the revolutionary play cannot be understood until the curtain has fallen on the fifth. To ignore the Restoration is to misjudge the Rebellion. France, a century and more after, marched along a bloodstained road in a period that likewise extended not very much over twenty years, from the calling of the States-General, in 1789, through consulate and empire to Moscow and to Leipzig. Only time tells all. In a fine figure the sublimest of Roman poets paints the struggle of warrior hosts upon the plain, the gleam of burnished arms, the fiery wheeling of the

horse, the charges that thunder on the ground. But yet, he says, there is a tranquil spot on the far-off heights whence all the scouring legions seem as if they stood still, and all the glancing flash and confusion of battle as though it were blended in a sheet of steady flame.[1] So history makes the shifting things seem fixed. Posterity sees a whole. With the statesman in revolutionary times it is different. Through decisive moments that seemed only trivial, and by critical turns that he took to be indifferent, he explores dark and untried paths, groping his way through a jungle of vicissitude, ambush, stratagem, expedient; a match for fortune in all her moods; lucky if now and again he catch a glimpse of the polar star. Such is the case of Cromwell. The effective revolution came thirty years later, and when it came it was no Cromwellian revolution; it was aristocratic and not democratic, secular and not religious, parliamentary and not military, the substitution for the old monarchy of a territorial oligarchy supreme alike in Lords and Commons. Nor is it true to say that the church after the Restoration became a mere shadow of her ancient form. For two centuries, besides her vast influence as a purely ecclesiastical organization, the church was supreme in the universities, those powerful organs in English national life; she was supreme in the public schools that fed them. The directing classes of the country were almost exclusively her sons. The land was theirs. Dissidents were tolerated; they throve and prospered; but they had little more share in the

[1] Lucretius, ii. 323-332.

government of the nation than if Cromwell had never been born. To perceive all this, to perceive that Cromwell did not succeed in turning aside the destinies of his people from the deep courses that history had preappointed for them into the new channels which he fondly hoped he was tracing with the point of his victorious sword, implies no blindness either to the gifts of a brave and steadfast man, or to the grandeur of some of his ideals of a good citizen and a well-governed state.

It is hard to deny that wherever force was useless Cromwell failed; or that his example would often lead in what modern opinion firmly judges to be false directions; or that it is in Milton and Bunyan rather than in Cromwell that we seek what was deepest, loftiest, and most abiding in Puritanism. We look to its apostles rather than its soldier. Yet Oliver's largeness of aim; his freedom of spirit, and the energy that comes of a free spirit; the presence of a burning light in his mind, though the light in our later times may have grown dim or gone out; his good faith, his valour, his constancy, have stamped his name, in spite of some exasperated acts that it is pure sophistry to justify, upon the imagination of men over all the vast area of the civilised world where the English tongue prevails. The greatest names in history are those who, in a full career and amid the turbid extremities of political action, have yet touched closest and at most points the wide ever-standing problems of the world, and the things in which men's interest never dies. Of this far-shining company Cromwell was surely one.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

'I WAS by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height nor yet in obscurity.' Such was Cromwell's account of himself. He was the descendant in the third degree of Richard Cromwell, whose earlier name was Richard Williams, a Welshman, from Glamorganshire, nephew, and one of the agents of Thomas Cromwell, the iron-handed servant of Henry VIII., the famous sledge-hammer of the monks. In the deed of jointure on his marriage the future Protector is described as Oliver Cromwell *alias* Williams. Hence those who insist that what is called a Celtic strain is needed to give fire and speed to an English stock, find Cromwell a case in point.

Thomas Cromwell's sister married Morgan Williams, the father of Richard, but when the greater name was assumed seems uncertain. What is certain is that he was in favour with Thomas Cromwell and with the king after his patron's fall, and that Henry VIII. gave him, among other spoils of the church, the revenues and manors belonging to the priory of Hinchinbrook and the abbey of Ramsey,

in Huntingdonshire and the adjacent counties. Sir Richard left a splendid fortune to an eldest son, whom Elizabeth made Sir Henry. This, the Golden Knight, so called from his profusion, was the father of Sir Oliver, a worthy of a prodigal turn like himself. Besides Sir Oliver, the Golden Knight had a younger son, Robert, and Robert in turn became the father of the mighty Oliver of history, who was thus the great-grandson of the first Richard.

Robert Cromwell married (1591) a young widow, Elizabeth Lynn. Her maiden name of Steward is only interesting because some of her stock boasted that if one should climb the genealogical tree high enough, it would be found that Elizabeth Steward and the royal Stewarts of Scotland had a common ancestor. Men are pleased when they stumble on one of Fortune's tricks, as if the regicide should himself turn out to be even from a far-off distance of the kingly line. The better opinion seems to be that Steward was not Stewart at all, but only Norfolk Styward.

The story of Oliver's early life is soon told. He was born at Huntingdon on April 25, 1599. His parents had ten children in all; Oliver was the only son who survived infancy. Homer has a line that has been taken to mean that it is bad for character to grow up an only brother among many sisters; but Cromwell at least showed no default in either the bold and strong or the tender qualities that belong to manly natures. He was sent to the public school of the place. The master was a learned and worthy divine, the preacher of the word of God in the town of

Huntingdon; the author of some classic comedies; of a proof in two treatises of the well-worn proposition that the Pope is Antichrist; and of a small volume called *The Theatre of God's Judgments,* in which he collects from sacred and profane story examples of the justice of God against notorious sinners both great and small, but more especially against those high persons of the world whose power insolently bursts the barriers of mere human justice. The youth of Huntingdon therefore drank of the pure milk of the stern word that bade men bind their kings in chains and their nobles in links of iron.

How long Oliver remained under Dr. Beard, what proficiency he attained in study and how he spent his spare time, we do not know, and it is idle to guess. In 1616 (April 23), at the end of his seventeenth year, he went to Cambridge as a fellow-commoner of Sidney Sussex College. Dr. Samuel Ward, the master, was an excellent and conscientious man and had taken part in the version of the Bible so oddly associated with the name of King James I. He took part also in the famous Synod of Dort (1619), where Calvinism triumphed over Arminianism. His college was denounced by Archbishop Laud as one of the nurseries of Puritanism, and there can be no doubt in what sort of atmosphere Cromwell passed those years of life in which the marked outlines of character are unalterably drawn.

After little more than a year's residence in the university, he lost his father (June 1617). Whether he went back to college we cannot tell, nor whether

there is good ground for the tradition that after quitting Cambridge he read law at Lincoln's Inn. It was the fashion for young gentlemen of the time, and Cromwell may have followed it. There is no reason to suppose that Cromwell was ever the stuff of which the studious are made. Some faint evidence may be traced of progress in mathematics; that he knew some of the common tags of Greek and Roman history; that he was able to hold his own in surface discussion on jurisprudence. In later days when he was Protector, the Dutch ambassador says that they carried on their conversation together in Latin. But, according to Burnet, Oliver's Latin was vicious and scanty, and of other foreign tongues he had none. There is a story about his arguing upon regicide from the principles of Mariana and Buchanan, but he may be assumed to have derived these principles from his own mother-wit, and not to have needed text-books. He had none of the tastes or attainments that attract us in many of those who either fought by his side or who fought against him. The spirit of the Renaissance was never breathed upon him. Cromwell had none of the fine judgment in the arts that made King Charles one of the most enthusiastic and judicious collectors of paintings known in his time. We cannot think of Cromwell as of Sir John Eliot, beguiling his heavy hours in the Tower with Plato and Seneca; or Hampden, pondering Davila's new *History of the Civil Wars in France*; or Milton, forsaking the 'quiet air of delightful studies' to play a man's part in the confusions of his time; or Falkland, in whom

the Oxford men in Clarendon's immortal picture 'found such an immenseness of wit and such a solidity of judgment, so infinite a fancy bound in by a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge that he was not ignorant in anything, yet such an excessive humility as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted and dwelt with him, as in a college situated in a purer air.' Cromwell was of another type. Bacon said about Sir Edward Coke that he conversed with books and not with men, who are the best books. Of Cromwell the reverse is true; for him a single volume comprehended all literature, and that volume was the Bible.

More satisfactory than guesses at the extent of Oliver's education is a sure glimpse of his views upon education, to be found in his advice when the time came, about an eldest son of his own. 'I would have him mind and understand business,' he says. 'Read a little history; study the mathematics and cosmography. These are good with subordination to the things of God. . . . These fit for public services, for which man is born. Take heed of an unactive, vain spirit. Recreate yourself with Sir Walter Raleigh's History; it 's a body of History, and will add much more to your understanding than fragments of story.' 'The tree of knowledge,' Oliver exhorts Richard to bear in mind, 'is not literal or speculative, but inward, transforming the mind to it.'

These brief hints of his riper days make no bad text for an educational treatise. Man is born for public service, and not to play the amateur; he should

mind and understand business, and beware of an unactive spirit; the history of mankind is to be studied as a whole, not in isolated fragments; true knowledge is not literal nor speculative, but such as builds up coherent character and grows a part of it, in conscious harmony with the Supreme Unseen Powers. All this is not full nor systematic like Ascham or Bacon or Milton or Locke; but Oliver's hints have the root of the matter in them, and in this deep sense of education he was himself undoubtedly bred.

His course is very obscure until we touch solid ground in what is usually one of the most decisive acts of life. In August 1620, being his twenty-second year, he was married to Elizabeth Bourchier at the Church of St. Giles in Cripplegate, London, where, fifty-four years later, John Milton was buried. Her father was a merchant on Tower Hill, the owner of land at Felsted in Essex, a knight, and a connection of the family of Hampden. Elizabeth Cromwell seems to have been a simple and affectionate character, full of homely solicitudes, intelligent, modest, thrifty, and gentle, but taking no active share in the fierce stress of her husband's life. Marriage and time hide strange surprises; the little bark floats on a summer bay, until a tornado suddenly sweeps it out to sea and washes it over angry waters to the world's end. When all was over, and Charles II. had come back to Whitehall, a paper reached the Council Office, and was docketed by the Secretary of State, 'Old Mrs. Cromwell, Noll's wife's petition.'

The sorrowful woman was willing to swear that she had never intermeddled with any of those public transactions which had been prejudicial to his late or present Majesty, and she was especially sensitive of the unjust imputation of detaining jewels belonging to the king, for she knew of none such. But this was not for forty years.

The stories about Oliver's wicked youth deserve not an instant's notice. In any case the ferocity of party passion was certain to invent them. There is no corroborative evidence for them. Wherever detail can be tested, the thing crumbles away, like the more harmless nonsense about his putting a crown on his head at private theatricals, and having a dream that he should one day be King of England; or about a congenial figure of the devil being represented on the tapestry over the door of the room in which Oliver was born. There is, indeed, one of his letters in which anybody who wishes to believe that in his college days Oliver drank, swore, gambled, and practised 'uncontrolled debaucheries,' may, if he chooses, find what he seeks. 'You know what my manner of life hath been,' he writes to his cousin, the wife of Oliver St. John, in 1638. 'Oh, I lived in darkness and hated light; I was the chief of sinners. This is true; I hated Godliness, yet God had mercy on me.'

Seriously to argue from such language as this that Cromwell's early life was vicious, is as monstrous as it would be to argue that Bunyan was a reprobate from the remorseful charges of *Grace Abounding*. From other evidence we know that Cromwell did not escape,

nor was it possible that he should, from those painful struggles with religious gloom that at one time or another confront nearly every type of mind endowed with spiritual faculty. They have found intense expression in many keys from Augustine down to Cowper's *Castaway*. Some they leave plunged in gulfs of perpetual despair, while stronger natures emerge from the conflict with all the force that is in them purified, exalted, fortified, illumined. Oliver was of the melancholic temperament, and the misery was heavy while it lasted. But the instinct of action was born in him, and when the summons came he met it with all the vigour of a strenuous faith and an unclouded soul.

After his marriage Cromwell returned to his home at Huntingdon, and there for eleven years took care of the modest estate that his father had left. For the common tradition of Oliver as the son of a brewer there is nothing like a sure foundation. Robert Cromwell undoubtedly got his living out of the land, though it is not impossible that he may have done occasional brewing for neighbours less conveniently placed for running water. We may accept or reject with tolerable indifference. The elder branch of his family meanwhile slowly sank down in the world, and in 1627 Hinchinbrook was sold to one of the house of Montagu, father of the admiral who in days to come helped to bring back Charles II., and an uncle of that Earl of Manchester by whose side Oliver was drawn into such weighty dispute when the storms of civil war arose. Decline of family interest did not

impair Oliver's personal position in his town, for in the beginning of 1628 he was chosen to represent Huntingdon in parliament.

This was the third parliament of the reign, the great parliament that fought and carried the Petition of Right, the famous enactment which recites and confirms the old instruments against forced loan or tax; which forbids arrest or imprisonment save by due process of law, forbids the quartering of soldiers or sailors in men's houses against their will, and shuts out the tyrannous decrees called by the name of martial law. Here the new member, now in his twenty-ninth year, saw at their noble and hardy task the first generation of the champions of the civil rights and parliamentary liberties of England. He saw the zealous and high-minded Sir John Eliot, the sage and intrepid Pym, masters of eloquence and tactical resource. He saw the first lawyers of the day —Coke, now nearing eighty, but as keen for the letter of the law now that it was for the people, as he had been when he took it to be on the side of authority; —Glanvil, Selden, 'the chief of men reputed in this land,'—all conducting the long train of arguments legal and constitutional for old laws and franchises, with an erudition, an acuteness, and a weight as cogent as any performances ever witnessed within the walls of the Commons House. By his side sat his cousin John Hampden, whose name speedily became, and has ever since remained, a standing symbol for civil courage and lofty love of country. On the same benches still sat Wentworth, in many respects the boldest and

most powerful political genius then in England, now for the last time using his gifts of ardent eloquence on behalf of the popular cause.

All the stout-hearted struggle of that memorable twelvemonth against tyrannical innovation in civil things and rigorous reaction in things spiritual Cromwell witnessed, down to the ever-memorable scene of English history where Holles and Valentine held the Speaker fast down in his chair, to assert the right of the House to control its own adjournment, and to launch Eliot's resolutions in defiance of the king. Cromwell's first and only speech in this parliament was the production of a case in which a reactionary bishop had backed up a certain divine in preaching flat popery at St. Paul's Cross, and had forbidden Cromwell's old master, Dr. Beard, to reply. The parliament was abruptly dissolved (March 1629), and for eleven years no other was called.

There seems to be no substance in the tale, though so circumstantially related, that in 1638, in company with his cousin Hampden, despairing of his country, he took his passage to America, and that the vessel was stopped by an order in Council. Whether he looked to emigration at some other time, we do not know. What is credible enough is Clarendon's story that five years later, on the day when the Great Remonstrance was passed, Cromwell whispered to Falkland that if it had been rejected he would have sold all he had the next morning, and never have seen England more, and he knew there were many other honest men of the same resolution. So near, the

royalist historian reflects, was this poor kingdom at that time to its deliverance.

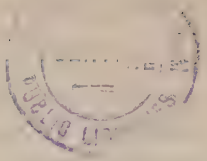
His property meanwhile had been increased by a further bequest of land in Huntingdon from his uncle Richard Cromwell. Two years after his return from Westminster (1631) he sold his whole Huntingdon property for eighteen hundred pounds, equivalent to between five and six thousand to-day. With this capital in hand he rented and stocked grazing-lands at the east end of St. Ives some five miles down the river, and here he remained steadily doing his business and watching the black clouds slowly rise on the horizon of national affairs. Children came in due order, nine of them in all. He went to the parish church, 'generally with a piece of red flannel round his neck, as he was subject to an inflammation in his throat.' He had his children baptized like other people, and for one of them he asked the vicar, a fellow of St. John's at Cambridge, to stand godfather. He took his part in the affairs of the place. At Huntingdon his keen public spirit and blunt speech had brought him into trouble. A new charter in which, among other provisions, Oliver was made a borough justice, transformed an open and popular corporation into a close one. Cromwell dealt faithfully with those who had procured the change. The mayor and aldermen complained to the Privy Council of the disgraceful and unseemly speeches used to them by him and another person, and one day a messenger from the Council carried the two offenders under arrest to London (November 1630). There was a long hearing

with many contradictory asseverations. We may assume that Cromwell made a stout defence on the merits, and he appears to have been discharged of blame, though he admitted that he had spoken in heat and passion and begged that his angry words might not be remembered against him. In 1636 he went from St. Ives to Ely, his old mother and unmarried sisters keeping house with him. This year his maternal uncle died and left to him the residuary interest under his will. The uncle had farmed the cathedral tithes of Ely, as his father had farmed them before him, and in this position Oliver had succeeded him. Ely was the home of Cromwell and his family until 1647.

He did not escape the pang of bereavement: his eldest son, a youth of good promise, died in 1639. Long afterward, Oliver lying ill at Hampton Court called for his Bible, and desired an honourable and godly person present to read aloud to him a passage from Philippians: 'Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' After the verses had been read, 'This scripture,' said Cromwell, then nearing his own end, 'did once save my life when my eldest son died, which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did.' It was this spirit, praised in Milton's words of music as his 'faith and matchless fortitude,' that bore him through the years of battle

and contention lying predestined in the still sealed scroll before him.

Cromwell's first surviving letter is evidence alike in topic and in language of the thoughts on which his heart was set. A lecturer was a man paid by private subscribers to preach a sermon after the official parson had read the service, and he was usually a puritan. Cromwell presses a friend in London for aid in keeping up a lecturer in St. Ives (1635). The best of all good works, he says, is to provide for the feeding of souls. 'Building of hospitals provides for men's bodies; to build material temples is judged a work of piety; but they that procure spiritual food, they that build up spiritual temples, they are the men truly charitable, truly pious.' About the same time (1635), Oliver's kinsman John Hampden was consulting his other kinsman, Oliver St. John, as to resisting the writ of ship-money. Laud, made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, was busy in the preparation of a new prayer-book for the regeneration of stubborn Scotland. Wentworth was fighting his high-handed battle for a better order in Ireland.



CHAPTER II.

THE STATE AND ITS LEADERS.

I.

STUDENTS of the struggle between monarchy and parliament in the seventeenth century have worked hard upon black-letter; on charter, custom, franchise, tradition, precedent, and prescription, on which the Commons defended their privileges and the king defended his prerogatives. How much the lawyers really founded their case on the precedents for which they had ransacked the wonderful collections of Sir Robert Cotton, or how far, on the other hand, their 'pedantry' was a mask for a determination that in their hearts rested on very different grounds, opens a discussion into which we need not enter here. What the elective element in the old original monarchy amounted to, and what the popular element in the ancient deliberative council amounted to; what differences in power and prerogative marked the office of a king when it was filled by Angevin, by Plantagenet, or by Tudor; how the control of parliament over legislation and taxation stood under the first three Edwards and under the last three Henries; whether

the popular champions in the seventeenth century were abandoning both the accustomed theory and the practice of parliament from Edward I. to the end of Elizabeth; whether the real conservative on the old lines of the constitution was not King Charles himself,—all these and kindred questions, profoundly interesting as they are, fill little space in the story of Cromwell. It was not until the day of the lawyers and the constitutionalists had passed that Cromwell's hour arrived, and 'the meagre, stale, forbidding ways of custom, law, and statute' vanished from men's thoughts.

To a man of Cromwell's political mind the questions were plain and broad, and could be solved without much history. If the estates of the crown no longer sufficed for the public service, could the king make the want good by taxing his subjects at his own good pleasure? Or was the charge to be exclusively imposed by the estates of the realm? Were the estates of the realm to have a direct voice in naming agents and officers of executive power, and to exact a full responsibility to themselves for all acts done in the name of executive power? Was the freedom of the subject to be at the mercy of arbitrary tribunals, and were judges to be removable at the king's pleasure? What was to be done—and this came closest home of all—to put down cruel assumptions of authority by the bishops, to reform the idleness of the clergy, to provide godly and diligent preachers, and sternly to set back the rising tide of popery, of vain ceremonial devices, and pernicious

Arminian doctrine? Such was the simple statement of the case as it presented itself to earnest and stirring men. Taxation and religion have ever been the two prime movers in human revolutions: in the civil troubles in the seventeenth century both these powerful factors were combined.

II.

In more than one important issue the king undoubtedly had the black-letter upon his side, and nothing is easier than to show that in some of the transactions, even before actual resort to arms, the Commons defied both letter and spirit. Charles was not an Englishman by birth, training, or temper, but he showed himself at the outset as much a legalist in method and argument as Coke, Selden, St. John, or any Englishman among them. It was in its worst sense that he thus from first to last played the formalist, and if to be a pedant is to insist on applying a stiff theory to fluid fact, no man ever deserved the name better.

Both king and Commons, however, were well aware that the vital questions of the future could be decided by no appeals to an obscure and disputable past. The manifest issue was whether prerogative was to be the basis of the government of England. Charles held that it had been always so, and made up his mind that so it should remain. He had seen the court of Paris, he had lived for several months in the court of Madrid, and he knew no reason why the absolutism of France and of Spain should not flourish at Whitehall. More

certain than vague influences such as these was the rising tide of royalism in high places in the church.

If this was the mind of Charles, Pym and Hampden and their patriot friends were equally resolved that the base of government should be in the parliament and in the Commons branch of the parliament. They claimed for parliament a general competence in making laws, granting money, levying taxes, supervising the application of their grants, restricting abuses of executive power, and holding the king's servants answerable for what they did or failed to do. Beyond all this vast field of activity and power, they entered upon the domain of the king as head of the church, and England found herself plunged into the vortex of that religious excitement which for a whole century and almost without a break had torn the Christian world, and distracted Europe with bloodshed and clamour that shook thrones, principalities, powers, and stirred the souls of men to their depths.

This double and deep-reaching quarrel, partly religious, partly political, Charles did not create. He inherited it in all its sharpness along with the royal crown. In nearly every country in Europe the same battle between monarch and assembly had been fought, and in nearly every case the possession of concentrated authority and military force, sometimes at the expense of the nobles, sometimes of the burghers, had left the monarch victorious. Queen Elizabeth of famous memory—'we need not be ashamed to call her so,' said Cromwell—carried prerogative at its highest. In the five-and-forty years of her reign only thirteen

sessions of parliament were held, and it was not until near the close of her life that she heard accents of serious complaint. Constitutional history in Elizabeth's time—the momentous institution of the Church of England alone excepted—is a blank chapter. Yet in spite of the subservient language that was natural toward so puissant and successful a ruler as Elizabeth, signs were not even then wanting that, when the stress of national peril should be relaxed, arbitrary power would no longer go unquestioned. The reign of James was one long conflict. The struggle went on for twenty years, and for every one of the most obnoxious pretensions and principles that were afterward sought to be established by King Charles, a precedent had been set by his father.

Neither the temperament with which Charles I. was born, nor the political climate in which he was reared, promised any good deliverance from so dangerous a situation. In the royal council-chamber, in the church, from the judicial bench,—these three great centres of organized government,—in all he saw prevailing the same favour for arbitrary power, and from all he learned the same oblique lessons of practical statecraft. On the side of religion his subjects noted things of dubious omen. His mother, Anne of Denmark, though her first interests were those of taste and pleasure, was probably at heart a catholic. His grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, had been the renowned representative and champion of the catholic party in the two kingdoms. From her and her mother, Mary of Guise, Charles had in his veins the

blood of that potent house of Lorraine who were in church and state the standard-bearers of the catholic cause in France. A few weeks after his accession he married (May 1625) the sister of the King of France and daughter of Henry of Navarre. His wife, a girl of fifteen at the time of her marriage, was a Bourbon on one side and a Medici on the other, an ardent catholic, and a devoted servant of the Holy See. That Charles was ever near to a change of faith there is no reason whatever to suppose. But he played with the great controversy when the papal emissaries round the queen drew him into argument, and he was as bitterly averse from the puritanic ideas, feelings, and aspirations of either England or Scotland, as Mary Stuart had ever been from the doctrines and discourses of John Knox.

It has been said that antagonism between Charles and his parliament broke out at once as an historical necessity. The vast question may stand over, how far the working of historical necessity is shaped by character and motive in given individuals. Suppose that Charles had been endowed with the qualities of Oliver,—his strong will, his active courage, his powerful comprehension, above all his perception of immovable facts,—how might things have gone? Or suppose Oliver the son of King James, and that he had inherited such a situation as confronted Charles? In either case the English constitution, and the imitations of it all over the globe, might have been run in another mould. As it was, Charles had neither vision nor grasp. It is not enough to say that he was undone

by his duplicity. There are unluckily far too many awkward cases in history where duplicity has come off triumphant. Charles was double, as a man of inferior understanding would be double who had much studied Bacon's essay on Simulation and Dissimulation, without digesting it or ever deeply marking its first sentence, that dissimulation is but a faint kind of policy or wisdom, for it asketh a strong wit and a strong heart to know when to tell truth and to do it; therefore it is the worst sort of politicians that are the great dissemblers. This pregnant truth Charles never took to heart. His fault—and no statesman can have a worse—was that he never saw things as they were. He had taste, imagination, logic, but he was a dreamer, an idealist, and a theoriser, in whom there might have been good rather than evil if only his dreams, theories, and ideals had not been out of relation with the hard duties of a day of storm. He was gifted with a fine taste for pictures, and he had an unaffected passion for good literature. When he was a captive he devoted hours daily not only to Bishop Andrewes and the *Ecclesiastical Polity* of Hooker, but to Tasso, Ariosto, the *Faerie Queene*, and above all to Shakespeare.

He was not without the more mechanical qualities of a good ruler: he was attentive to business, methodical, decorous, as dignified as a man can be without indwelling moral dignity, and a thrifty economist meaning well by his people. His manners if not actually ungracious were ungenial and disobliging. 'He was so constituted by nature,' said the Venetian ambassador, 'that he never obliges anybody either by

word or by act.' In other words, he was the royal egotist without the mask. Of gratitude for service, of sympathy, of courage in friendship, he never showed a spark. He had one ardent and constant sentiment, his devotion to his consort.

One of the glories of literature is the discourse in which the mightiest of French divines commemorates the strange vicissitudes of fortune—the glittering exaltation, the miseries, the daring, the fortitude, and the unshaken faith of the queen of Charles I. As the delineation of an individual it is exaggerated and rhetorical, but the rhetoric is splendid and profound. Bossuet, more than a divine, was moralist, statesman, philosopher, exploring with no mere abstract speculative eye the thread of continuous purpose in the history of mankind, but using knowledge, eloquence, and art to mould the wills of men. His defence of established order has been called the great spectacle of the seventeenth century. It certainly was one of them, and all save narrow minds will choose to hear how the spectacle in England moved this commanding genius.

Taking a text that was ever present to him, 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth,' Bossuet treated that chapter of history in which the life of Henrietta Maria was an episode, as a lofty drama with many morals of its own. 'I am not a historian,' he says, 'to unfold the secrets of cabinets, or the ordering of battlefields, or the interests of parties; it is for me to raise myself above man, to make every creature tremble under the

judgments of Almighty God.' Not content with the majestic commonplaces so eternally true, so inexorably apt, yet so incredulously heard, about the nothingness of human pomp and earthly grandeur, he extracts special lessons from the calamities of the particular daughter of St. Louis whose lot inspired his meditations. What had drawn these misfortunes on the royal house in England? Was it inborn libertinism in English character that brought the rebellion about? Nay, he cries; when we look at the incredible facility with which religion was first overthrown in that country, then restored, then overthrown again, by Henry VIII., by Edward VI., by Mary, by Elizabeth, so far from finding the nation rebellious, or its parliament proud or factious, we are driven to reproach the English people with being only too submissive. For did they not place their very faith, their consciences, their souls, under the yoke of earthly kings? The fault was with the kings themselves. They it was who taught the nation that their ancient catholic creed was a thing to be lightly flung away. Subjects ceased to revere the maxims of religion, when they saw them wantonly surrendered to the passions or the interests of their princes. Then the great orator, with a command of powerful stroke upon stroke that presbyterians in their war with independents might well have envied, drew a picture of the mad rage of the English for disputing of divine things without end, without rule, without submission, men's minds falling headlong from ruin to ruin. Who could arrest the catastrophe but the bishops of the church? And then turning to reproach

them as sternly as he had reproached their royal masters, it was the bishops, he exclaimed, who had brought to naught the authority of their own thrones by openly condemning all their predecessors up to the very source of their consecration, up to St. Gregory the Pope and St. Augustine the missionary monk. By skilfully worded contrast with these doings of apostate kings and prelates, he glorified the zeal of Henrietta Maria; boasted how many persons in England had abjured their errors under the influence of her almoners; and how the zealous shepherds of the afflicted catholic flock of whom the world was not worthy, saw with joy restored the glorious symbols of their faith in the chapel of the Queen of England, and the persecuted church that in other days hardly dared so much as to sigh or weep over its past glory, now sang aloud the song of Zion in a strange land.

All this effulgence of words cannot alter the fact that the queen was the evil genius of her husband, and of the nation over whom a perverse fate had appointed him to rule. Men ruefully observed that a French queen never brought happiness to England. To suffer women of foreign birth and alien creed to meddle with things of state, they reflected, had ever produced grievous desolation for our realm. Charles had a fancy to call her Marie rather than Henrietta, and even puritans had superstition enough to find a bad omen in a woman's name that was associated with no good luck to England. Of the many women, good and bad, who have tried to take part in affairs of state from Cleopatra or the Queen of Sheba downwards,

nobody by character or training was ever worse fitted than the wife of Charles I. for such a case as that in which she found herself. Henry IV., her father, thought that to change his Huguenot faith and go to mass was an easy price to pay for the powerful support of Paris. Her mother came of the marvellous Florentine house that had given to Europe such masters of craft as Cosmo and Lorenzo, Leo X. and Clement VII., and Catherine of the Bartholomew massacre. But the queen had none of the depth of these famous personages. To her, alike as catholic and as queen seated on a shaking throne, the choice between bishop and presbyter within a protestant communion was matter for contemptuous indifference. She understood neither her husband's scruples, nor the motives of his adversaries. The sanctity of law and immemorial custom, rights of taxation, parliamentary privilege, Magna Charta, habeas corpus, and all the other symbols of our civil freedom, were empty words without meaning to her petulant and untrained mind. In Paris by the side of the great ladies whose lives were passed in seditious intrigues against Richelieu or Mazarin, Henrietta Maria would have been in her native element. She would have delighted in all the intricacies of the web of fine-spun conspiracy in which Maria de' Medici, her mother, and Anne of Austria, her sister-in-law, and Mme. de Chevreuse, her close friend and comrade, first one and then the other spent their restless days. Habits and qualities that were mischievous enough even in the galleries of the Louvre, in the atmosphere of Westminster and Whitehall were

laden with immediate disaster. In intrepidity and fortitude she was a true daughter of Henry of Navarre. Her energy was unsparing, and her courage. Nine times she crossed the seas in storm and tempest. When her waiting-women were trembling and weeping, she assured them, with an air of natural serenity that seemed of itself to bring back calm, that no queen was ever drowned.

D'Ewes has left a picture of the queen as he saw her at dinner at Whitehall, long after her marriage: 'I perceived her to be a most absolute delicate lady, after I had exactly surveyed all the features of her face, much enlivened by her radiant and sparkling black eyes. Besides, her deportment among her women was so sweet and humble, and her speech and looks to her other servants so mild and gracious, as I could not abstain from divers deep-fetched sighs, to consider that she wanted the knowledge of the true religion.' 'The queen,' says Burnet, 'was a woman of great vivacity in conversation, and loved all her life long to be in intrigues of all sorts, but was not so secret in them as such times and affairs required. She was a woman of no manner of judgment; she was bad at contrivance, and much worse in execution; but by the liveliness of her discourse she made always a great impression on the king.'

III.

Just as the historic school has come to an end that despatched Oliver Cromwell as a hypocrite, so we are

escaping from the other school that dismissed Charles as a tyrant, Laud as a driveller and a bigot, and Wentworth as an apostate. That Wentworth passed over from the popular to the royalist side, and that by the same act he improved his fortunes and exalted his influence, is true. But there is no good reason to condemn him for shifting the foundation of his views of national policy. He was never a puritan, and never a partisan of the supremacy of parliament. By temperament and conviction he was a firm believer in organized authority. Though he began in opposition, his instincts all carried him toward the side of government; and if he came round to the opinion that a single person, and not the House of Commons, was the vital organ of national authority, this was an opinion that Cromwell himself in some of the days to come was destined apparently to share and to exemplify. Wentworth's ideal was centred in a strong state, exerting power for the common good; and the mainspring of a strong state must be monarch, not parliament. It was the idea of the time that governing initiative must come from the throne, with or without a check in the people. Happily for us, men of deeper insight than Wentworth perceived that the assertion of the popular check was at this deciding moment in English history more important than to strengthen executive power in the hands of the king. Wentworth, with all the bias of a man born for government and action, may easily have come to think otherwise. That he associated the elevation of his own personality with the triumph of what he

took for the right cause, is a weakness, if weakness it be, that he shares with some of the most upright reformers that have ever lived. It is a chaste ambition if rightly placed, he said at his trial, to have as much power as may be, that there may be power to do the more good in the place where a man lives. The actual possession of power stimulated this natural passion for high principles of government. His judgment was clear, as his wit and fancy were quick. He was devoted to friends, never weary of taking pains for them, thinking nothing too dear for them. If he was extremely choleric and impatient, yet it was in a large and imperious way. He had energy, boldness, unsparing industry and attention, long-sighted continuity of thought and plan, lofty flight, and as true a concern for order and the public service as Pym or Oliver or any of them.

One short scene may suffice to bring him in act and life before us. The convention of the Irish clergy met to discuss the question of bringing their canons into conformity with those of the English church. Wentworth writes from Dublin to Laud (1634):—

> The popish party growing extreme perverse in the Commons House, and the parliament thereby in great danger to have been lost in a storm, had so taken up my thoughts and endeavours, that for five or six days it was not almost possible for me to take an account how business went amongst them of the clergy. . . . At length I got a little time, and that most happily, to inform myself of the state of those papers, and found (that they had done divers things of great inconvenience without consultation with their bishops). I instantly sent for Dean Andrews, that reverend clerk who sat forsooth

in the chair of this committee, requiring him to bring along the aforesaid book of canons. . . . When I came to open the book and run over their *deliberandums* in the margin, I confess I was not so much moved since I came into Ireland. I told him, certainly not a dean of Limerick, but Ananias had sat in the chair of that committee ; however sure I was Ananias had been there in spirit, if not in body, with all the fraternities and conventicles of Amsterdam ; that I was ashamed and scandalised with it above measure. I therefore said he should leave the book with me, and that I did command him that he should report nothing to the House until he heard again from me. Being thus nettled, I gave present directions for a meeting, and warned the primate (certain bishops, etc.) to be with me the next morning. Then I publicly told them how unlike clergymen, that owed canonical obedience to their superiors, they had proceeded in their committee ; how unheard of a part it was for a few petty clerks to presume to make articles of faith . . . But those heady and arrogant courses, they must know, I was not to endure ; but if they were disposed to be frantic in this dead and cold season of the year, would I suffer them to be heard either in convocation or in their pulpits. (Then he gave them five specific orders.) This meeting then broke off ; there were some hot spirits, sons of thunder, amongst them, who moved that they should petition me for a free synod. But, in fine, they could not agree among themselves who should put the bell about the cat's neck, and so this likewise vanished.

All this marks precisely the type of man required to deal with ecclesiastics and rapacious nobles alike. The English colonist and his ecclesiastical confederate and ally were the enemy, and nobody has ever seen this so effectually as Strafford saw it. Bishops were said to be displaced with no more ceremony than excisemen. The common impression of Wentworth

is shown in an anecdote about Williams, afterwards Archbishop of York. When the court tried to pacify Williams with the promise of a good bishopric in Ireland, he replied that he had held out for seven years against his enemies in England, but if they sent him to Ireland he would fall into the hands of a man who within seven months would find out some old statute or other to cut off his head.

The pretty obvious parallel has often been suggested between Strafford and Richelieu; but it is no more than superficial. There is no proportion between the vast combinations, the immense designs, the remorseless rigours, and the majestic success with which the great cardinal built up royal power in France and subjugated reactionary forces in Europe, and the petty scale of Wentworth's eight years of rule in Ireland. To frighten Dean Andrews or Lord Mountnorris out of their wits was a very different business from bringing Montmorencys, Chalais, Marillacs, Cinq-Mars, to the scaffold. It is true that the general aim was not very different. Richelieu said to the king: 'I promised your Majesty to employ all my industry and all the authority that he might be pleased to give me to ruin the Huguenot party, to beat down the pride of the great, to reduce all subjects to their duty, and to raise up his name among other nations to the height at which it ought to be.' Strafford would have said much the same. He, too, aspired to make his country a leading force in the councils of Europe, as Elizabeth had done, and by Elizabeth's patient and thrifty policy. Unlike his master of flighty and confused brain, he

perceived the need of system and a sure foundation. Strafford's success would have meant the transformation of the state within the three kingdoms, not into the monarchy of the Restoration of 1660 or of the Revolution of 1688, but at best into something like the qualified absolutism of modern Prussia.

As time went on and things grew hotter, Wentworth's ardent and haughty genius drew him into more energetic antagonism to the popular claim and its champions. In his bold and imposing personality they recognised that all those sinister ideas, methods, and aims which it was the business of their lives to overthrow, were gathered up. The precise date is not easily fixed at which Wentworth gained a declared ascendancy in the royal counsels, if ascendancy be the right word for a chief position in that unstable chamber. In 1632 he was made lord deputy in Ireland, he reached Dublin Castle in the following year, and for seven years he devoted himself exclusively to Irish administration. He does not seem to have been consulted upon general affairs before 1637, and it was later than this when Charles began to lean upon him. It was not until 1640 that he could prevail upon the king to augment his political authority by making him lord-lieutenant and Earl of Strafford.

If Strafford was a bad counsellor for the times, and the queen a worse, Laud,[1] who filled the critical station of Archbishop of Canterbury, was perhaps the worst counsellor of the three. Still let us save ourselves

[1] For a fearful diatribe against Laud by James Mill, see Bain's *Life of James Mill*, p. 290.

from the extravagances of some modern history. 'His memory,' writes one, 'is still loathed as the meanest, the most cruel, and the most narrow-minded man who ever sat on the episcopal bench' (Buckle). 'We entertain more unmitigated contempt for him,' says another, 'than for any character in history' (Macaulay). It is pretty safe to be sure that these slashing superlatives are never true. Laud was no more the simpleton and the bigot of Macaulay, than he was the saint to whom in our day Anglican high-fliers dedicate painted windows, or whom they describe as Newman did, as being 'cast in a mould of proportions that are much above our own, and of a stature akin to the elder days of the church.' Burnet, who was no Laudian, says that he 'was a learned, a sincere and zealous man, regular in his own life, and humble in his private deportment; but he was a hot, indiscreet man, eagerly pursuing some matters that were either very inconsiderable or mischievous, such as setting the communion-table by the east wall of churches, bowing to it and calling it the altar, the breaking of lectures, the encouraging of sports on the Lord's day; . . . and yet all the zeal and heat of that time was laid out on these.' The agent of the Vatican described him as timid, ambitious, inconstant, and therefore ill equipped for great enterprises. Whitelocke tells us that his father was anciently and thoroughly acquainted with Laud, and used to say of him that he was 'too full of fire, though a just and good man; and that his want of experience in state matters, and his too much zeal for the church,

and heat if he proceeded in the way he was then in, would set this nation on fire.'

It was indeed Laud who did most to kindle the blaze. He was harder than anybody else both in the Star Chamber and the High Commission. He had a restless mind, a sharp tongue, and a hot temper; he took no trouble to persuade, and he leaned wholly on the law of the church and the necessity of enforcing obedience to it. He had all the harshness that is so common in a man of ardent convictions, who happens not to have intellectual power enough to defend them. But he was no harder of heart than most of either his victims or his judges. Prynne was more vindictive and sanguinary than Laud; and a Scottish presbyter could be as arrogant and unrelenting as the English primate. Much of Laud's energy was that of good stewardship. The reader who laughs at his injunction that divines should preach in gowns and not in cloaks, must at least applaud when in the same document avaricious bishops are warned not to dilapidate the patrimony of their successors by making long leases, or taking heavy fines on renewal, or cutting down the timber. This was one side of that love of external order, uniformity, and decorum, which when applied to rites and ceremonies, church furniture, church apparel, drove English puritanism frantic. 'It is called superstition nowadays,' Laud complained, 'for any man to come with more reverence into a church, than a tinker and his dog into an ale-house.'

That he had any leaning towards the Pope is cer-

tainly untrue ; and his eagerness to establish a branch of the Church of England in all the courts of Christendom, and even in the cities of the Grand Turk, points rather to an exalted dream that the Church of England might one day spread itself as far abroad as the Church of Rome. Short of this, he probably aspired to found a patriarchate of the three kingdoms, with Canterbury as the metropolitan centre. He thought the puritans narrow, and the Pope's men no better. Churchmen in all ages are divided into those on the one hand who think most of institutions, and those on the other who think most of the truths on which the institutions rest, and of the spirit that gives them life. Laud was markedly of the first of these two types, and even of that doctrinal zeal that passed for spiritual unction in those hot times he had little. Yet it is worth remembering that it was his influence that overcame the reluctance of the pious and devoted George Herbert to take orders. This can hardly have been the influence of a mean and cruel bigot. Jeremy Taylor, whose *Liberty of Prophesying* is one of the landmarks in the history of toleration, was the client and disciple of Laud. His personal kindness to Chillingworth and to John Hales has been taken as a proof of his tolerance of latitudinarianism, and some passages in his own works are construed as favouring liberal theology. That liberal theology would have quickly progressed within the church under Laud's rule, so long as outer uniformity was preserved, is probably true, and an important truth it is in judging the events of his

epoch. At the same time Laud was as hostile as most contemporary puritans to doubts and curious search, just as he shared with his presbyterian enemies their hatred of any toleration for creed or church outside of the established fold. He was fond of learning and gave it munificent support, and he had the merit of doing what he could to found his cause upon reason. But men cannot throw off the spirit of their station, and after all his sheet-anchor was authority. His ideal has been described as a national church, governed by an aristocracy of bishops, invested with certain powers by divine right, and closely united with the monarchy. Whether his object was primarily doctrinal, to cast out the Calvinistic spirit, or the restoration of church ceremonial, it would be hard to decide; but we may be sure that if he actively hated heresies about justification or predestination, it was rather as breaches of order than as either errors of intellect or corruptions of soul.

'He had few vulgar or private vices,' says a contemporary, 'and, in a word, was not so much to be called bad as unfit for the state of England.' He was unfit for the state of England, because, instead of meeting a deep spiritual movement with a missionary inspiration of his own, he sought no saintlier weapons than oppressive statutes and persecuting law-courts. It may be at least partially true that the nation had been a consenting party to the Tudor despotism, from which both statute and court had come down. Persecution has often won in human history; often has a violent hand dashed out the lamp of truth. But the

puritan exodus to New England was a signal, and no statesman ought to have misread it, that new forces were arising and would require far sharper persecution to crush them than the temper of the nation was likely to endure.

In the early stages of the struggle between parliament and king, the only leader on the popular side on a level in position with Strafford and Laud was John Pym, in many ways the foremost of all our parliamentary worthies. A gentleman of good family and bred at Oxford, he had entered the House of Commons eleven years before the accession of Charles. He made his mark early as one who understood the public finances, and, what was even more to the point, as a determined enemy of popery. From the first, in the words of Clarendon, he had drawn attention for being concerned and passionate in the jealousies of religion, and much troubled with the countenance given to the opinions of Arminius. He was a puritan in the widest sense of that word of many shades. That is to say, in the expression of one who came later, 'he thought it part of a man's religion to see that his country be well governed,' and by good government he meant the rule of righteousness both in civil and in sacred things. He wished the monarchy to stand, and the Church of England to stand; nor was any man better grounded in the maxims and precedents that had brought each of those exalted institutions to be what it was.

Besides massive breadth of judgment, Pym had one of those luminous and discerning minds that have the

rare secret in times of high contention of singling out the central issues and choosing the best battle-ground. Early he perceived and understood the common impulse that was uniting throne and altar against both ancient rights and the social needs of a new epoch. He was no revolutionist either by temper or principle. A single passage from one of his speeches is enough to show us the spirit of his statesmanship, and it is well worth quoting. 'The best form of government,' he said, 'is that which doth actuate and dispose every part and member of a state to the common good; for as those parts give strength and ornament to the whole, so they receive from it again strength and protection in their several stations and degrees. If, instead of concord and interchange of support, one part seeks to uphold an old form of government, and the other part introduce a new, they will miserably consume one another. Histories are full of the calamities of entire states and nations in such cases. It is, nevertheless, equally true that time must needs bring about some alterations. . . . Therefore have those commonwealths been ever the most durable and perpetual which have often reformed and recomposed themselves according to their first institution and ordinance. By this means they repair the breaches, and counterwork the ordinary and natural effects of time.'

This was the English temper at its best. Surrounded by men who were often apt to take narrow views, Pym, if ever English statesman did, took broad ones; and to impose broad views upon the narrow is

one of the things that a party leader exists for. He had the double gift, so rare even among leaders in popular assemblies, of being at once practical and elevated; a master of tactics and organizing arts, and yet the inspirer of solid and lofty principles. How measure the perversity of king and counsellors who forced into opposition a man so imbued with the deep instinct of government, so whole-hearted, so keen of sight, so skilful in resource as Pym?

CHAPTER III.

PURITANISM AND THE DOUBLE ISSUE.

I.

UNIVERSAL history has been truly said to make a large part of every national history. The lamp that lights the path of a single nation receives its kindling flame from a central line of beacon-fires that mark the onward journey of the race. The English have never been less insular in thought and interest than they were in the seventeenth century. About the time when Calvin died (1564) it seemed as if the spiritual empire of Rome would be confined to the two peninsulas of Italy and Spain. North of the Alps and north of the Pyrenees the Reformation appeared to be steadily sweeping all before it. Then the floods turned back; the power of the papacy revived, its moral ascendancy was restored; the counter-reformation or the catholic reaction, by the time when Cromwell and Charles came into the world, had achieved startling triumphs. The indomitable activity of the Jesuits had converted opinion, and the arm of flesh lent its aid in the holy task of reconquering Christendom. What the arm of flesh meant the

English could see with the visual eye. They never forgot Mary Tudor and the protestant martyrs. In 1567 Alva set up his court of blood in the Netherlands. In 1572 the pious work in France began with the massacre of St. Bartholomew. In 1588 the Armada appeared in the British Channel for the subjugation and conversion of England. In 1605 Guy Fawkes and his powder-barrels were found in the vault under the House of Lords. These were the things that explain the endless angry refrain against popery, that rings through our seventeenth century with a dolorous monotony at which modern indifference may smile, and reason and tolerance may groan.

Britain and Holland were the two protestant strongholds, and it was noticed that the catholics in Holland were daily multiplying into an element of exceeding strength, while in England, though the catholics had undoubtedly fallen to something very considerably less than the third of the whole population, which was their proportion in the time of Elizabeth, still they began under James and Charles to increase again. People counted with horror in Charles's day some ninety catholics in places of trust about the court, and over one hundred and ninety of them enjoying property and position in the English counties. What filled England with dismay filled the pertinacious Pope Urban VIII. with the hope of recovering here some of the ground that he had lost elsewhere, and he sent over first Panzani, then Cuneo, then Rossetti, to work for the reconquest to catholicism of the nation whom another Pope a thousand years

before had brought within the Christian fold. The presence of the Roman agents at Whitehall only made English protestantism more violently restive. A furious struggle was raging on the continent of Europe. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48) was not in all its many phases a contest of protestant and catholic, but that tremendous issue was never remote or extinct; and even apart from the important circumstance that the Elector Palatine had espoused the daughter of James I., its fluctuations kept up a strong and constant undercurrent of feeling and attention in England.

II.

'The greatest liberty of our kingdom is religion,' said Pym, and Cromwell's place in history is due to the breadth with which he underwent this mastering impression of the time, and associated in his own person the double conditions, political and moral, of national advance. Though the conditions were two-fold, religion strikes the key-note. Like other movements, the course of the Reformation followed the inborn differences of human temperament, and in due time divided itself into a right wing and a left. Passion and logic, the two great working elements of revolutionary change, often over-hot the one, and narrow and sophistical the other, carry men along at different rates according to their natural composition, and drop them at different stages. Most go to fierce extremes; few hold on in the 'quiet flow of truths that soften hatred, temper strife'; and for these chosen

spirits there is no place in the hour of conflagration. In England the left wing of protestantism was puritanism, and puritanism in its turn threw out an extreme left with a hundred branches of its own. The history of Cromwell almost exactly covers this development from the steady-going doctrinal puritanism he found prevailing when he first emerged upon the public scene, down to the faiths of the countless enthusiastic sects whom he still left preaching and praying and warring behind him when his day was over.

In this long process, so extensive and so complicated,—an inter-related evolution of doctrine, discipline, manners, ritual, church polity, all closely linked with corresponding changes in affairs of civil government,—it is not easy to select a leading clue through the labyrinth. It is not easy to disentangle the double plot in church and state, nor to fix in a single formula that wide twofold impulse, religious and political, under which Cromwell's age, and Cromwell the man of his age, marched toward their own ideals of purified life and higher citizenship. It is enough here to say in a word that in the Cromwellian period when the ferment at once so subtle and so tumultuous had begun to clear, it was found that, though by no direct and far-sighted counsel of Cromwell's own, two fertile principles had struggled into recognised life upon English soil—the principle of toleration, and the principle of free or voluntary churches. These might both of them have seemed to be of the very essence of the Reformation; but, as everybody knows, Free

Inquiry and Free Conscience, the twin pillars of protestantism in its fundamental theory, were in practice hidden out of sight and memory, and, as we shall see, even Cromwell and his independents shrank from the full acceptance of their own doctrines. The advance from the early to the later phases of puritanism was not rapid. Heated as the effervescence was, its solid products were slow to disengage themselves. Only by steps did the new principles of Toleration and the Free Church find a place even in the two most capacious understandings of the time—in the majestic reason of Milton and the vigorous and penetrating practical perceptions of Cromwell.

Puritanism meanwhile profited by the common tendency among men of all times to set down whatever goes amiss to something wrong in government. It is in vain for the most part that sage observers like Hooker try to persuade us that 'these stains and blemishes, springing from the root of human frailty and corruption, will remain until the end of the world, what form of government soever take place.' Mankind is by nature too restless, too readily indignant, too hopeful, too credulous of the unknown, ever to acquiesce in this. But the English Revolution of the seventeenth century was no mere ordinary case of a political opposition. The puritans of the Cromwellian time were forced into a brave and energetic conflict against misgovernment in church and state. But it is to the honour of puritanism in all its phases that it strove with unending constancy, by the same effort to pierce inward to those very roots of 'human

frailty and corruption' that are always the true cause of the worst mischiefs of an unregenerate world. Puritanism came from the deeps. It was, like Stoicism, monasticism, Jansenism, even Mohammedanism, a manifestation of elements in human nature that are indestructible. It flowed from yearnings that make themselves felt in Eastern world and Western; it sprang from aspirations that breathe in men and women of many communions and faiths; it arose in instincts that seldom conquer for more than a brief season, and yet are never crushed. An ascetic and unworldly way of thinking about life, a rigorous moral strictness, the subjugation of sense and appetite, a coldness to every element in worship and ordinance external to the believer's own soul, a dogma unyielding as cast-iron—all these things satisfy moods and sensibilities in man that are often silent and fleeting, easily drowned in reaction, but readily responsive to the awakening voice.

History, as Döllinger has said, is no simple game of abstractions; men are more than doctrines. It is not a certain theory of grace that makes the Reformation; it is Luther, it is Calvin. Calvin shaped the mould in which the bronze of puritanism was cast. That commanding figure, of such vast power, yet somehow with so little lustre, by his unbending will, his pride, his severity, his French spirit of system, his gift for government, for legislation, for dialectic in every field, his incomparable industry and persistence, had conquered a more than pontifical ascendancy in the protestant world. He meets us in England, as in

Scotland, Holland, France, Switzerland, and the rising England across the Atlantic. He was dead (1564) a generation before Cromwell was born, but his influence was still at its height. Nothing less than to create in man a new nature was his far-reaching aim, to regenerate character, to simplify and consolidate religious faith. Men take a narrow view of Calvin when they think of him only as the preacher of justification by faith, and the foe of sacerdotal mediation. His scheme comprehended a doctrine that went to the very root of man's relations with the scheme of universal things; a church order as closely compacted as that of Rome; a system of moral discipline as concise and as imperative as the code of Napoleon. He built it all upon a certain theory of the government of the universe, which by his agency has exerted an amazing influence upon the world. It is a theory that might have been expected to sink men crouching and paralysed into the blackest abysses of despair, and it has in fact been answerable for much anguish in many a human heart. Still Calvinism has proved itself a famous soil for rearing heroic natures. Founded on St. Paul and on Augustine, it was in two or three sentences this:—Before the foundations of the world were laid, it was decreed by counsel secret to us that some should be chosen out of mankind to everlasting salvation, and others to curse and damnation. In the figure of the memorable passage of the Epistle to the Romans, as the potter has power over the clay, so men are fashioned by antemundane will, some to be vessels of honour and of mercy, others

to be vessels of dishonour and of wrath. Then the Potter has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. On this black granite of Fate, Predestination, and Foreknowledge absolute, the strongest of the protestant fortresses all over the world were founded. Well might it have been anticipated that fatalism as unflinching as this would have driven men headlong into 'desperation and wrecklessness of most unclean living.' Yet that was no more the actual effect of the fatalism of St. Paul, Augustine, and Calvin than it was of the fatalism of the Stoics or of Mahomet. On the contrary, Calvinism exalted its votaries to a pitch of heroic moral energy that has never been surpassed; and men who were bound to suppose themselves moving in chains inexorably riveted, along a track ordained by a despotic and unseen Will before time began, have yet exhibited an active courage, a resolute endurance, a cheerful self-restraint, an exulting self-sacrifice, that men count among the highest glories of the human conscience.

It is interesting to think what is the secret of this strange effect of the doctrine of fatality; for that was the doctrine over which Cromwell brooded in his hours of spiritual gloom, and on which he nourished his fortitude in days of fierce duress, of endless traverses and toils. Is it, as some have said, that people embraced a rigorous doctrine because they were themselves by nature austere, absolute, stiff, just, rather than merciful? Is it, in other words, character that fixes creed, or creed that fashions character? Or is

there a bracing and an exalting effect in the unrewarded morality of Calvinism; in the doctrine that good works done in view of future recompense have no merit; in that obedience to duty for its own sake which, in Calvin as in Kant, has been called one of the noblest efforts of human conscience towards pure virtue? Or, again, is there something invigorating and inspiring in the thought of acting in harmony with eternal law, however grim; of being no mere link in a chain of mechanical causation, but a chosen instrument in executing the sublime decrees of invincible power and infinite intelligence? However we may answer all the insoluble practical enigmas that confronted the Calvinist, just as for that matter they confront the philosophic necessarian or determinist of to-day, Calvinism was the general theory through which Cromwell looked forth upon the world. That he ever argued it out, or was of a turn of mind for arguing it out, we need not suppose. Without ascending to those clouded and frowning heights, he established himself on the solid rock of Calvinistic faith that made their base.

Simplification is the key-word to the Reformation, as it is to every other revolution with a moral core. The vast fabric of belief, practice, and worship which the hosts of popes, doctors, schoolmen, founders of orders, the saints and sages in all their classes and degrees, had with strong brains and devout hearts built up in the life and imagination of so many centuries, was brought back to the ideal of a single simplified relation—God, the Bible, the conscience of

the individual man, and nothing more nor beyond. The substitution of the book for the church was the essence of the protestant revolt, and it was the essence of Cromwell's whole intellectual being. Like 'the Christian Cicero,' twelve centuries before, he said: 'We who are instructed in the science of truth by the Holy Scriptures know the beginning of the world and its end.'

Cromwell's Bible was not what the Bible is to-day. Criticism, comparative, chronological, philological, historical, had not impaired its position as the direct word of God, a single book, one and whole, one page as inspired as another, one text as binding as another. Faith in the literal construction of the word was pushed to an excess as much resembling a true superstition or over-belief, as anything imputed to the catholics. Science had set up no reign of law, nor hinted a doubt on the probabilities of miraculous intervention. No physical theories had dimmed faith in acts of specific creation; the aërial perspective and vistas of time were very primitive. Whatever happened, great or small, was due to wrath or favour from above. When an organ was burned down in the new French church at the Hague, it was an omen of the downfall of popery and prelacy. When the foreman superintending the building of a castle for the queen at Bristol fell from a ladder and broke his neck, it was a stupendous testimony against the Scarlet Woman. Tiverton, by holding its market on a Monday, made occasion for profaning the Lord's day, and so the town was burned to the ground. Fisher-

men one Sabbath morning, the sun shining hot upon the water, and a great company of salmon at play, were tempted to put forth, and they made a great draught, but God's judgment did not halt, for never more were fish caught there, and the neighbouring town was half ruined. People were tormented by no misgiving, as Ranke says, how 'the secrets of divine things could be brought into such direct connection with the complications of human affairs.' The God to whom Cromwell in heart as in speech appealed, was no stream of tendency, no supernaturalistic hypothesis, no transcendental symbol or synthesis, but the Lord of Hosts of the Old Testament. The saints and puritans were the chosen people. All the denunciations of the prophets against the oppressors of Israel were applied to the letter against bishops and princes. And Moses and Joshua, Gideon and Barak, Samson and Jephthah, were the antetypes of those who now in a Christian world thought themselves called, like those heroes of old time, to stop the mouths of lions and turn to flight the armies of the aliens.

Cromwell is never weary of proclaiming that the things that have come to pass have been the wonderful works of God, breaking the rod of the oppressor. Great place and business in the world, he says, is not worth looking after; he does not seek such things: he is called to them, and is not without assurance that the Lord will enable his poor worm to do his will and fulfil his generation. The vital thing is to fear unbelief, self-seeking, confidence in the arm of flesh, and opinion of any instruments that they are other

than as dry bones. Of dogma he rarely speaks. Religion to him is not dogma, but communion with a Being apart from dogma. 'Seek the Lord and his face continually,' he writes to Richard Cromwell, his son; 'let this be the business of your life and strength, and let all things be subservient and in order to this.' To Richard Mayor, the father of his son's wife, he says: 'Truly our work is neither from our own brains nor from our courage and strength; but we follow the Lord who goeth before, and gather what he scattereth, that so all may appear to be from him.' Such is ever the refrain, incessantly repeated, to his family, to the parliament, on the homely occasions of domestic life, in the time of public peril, in the day of battle, in the day of crowning victory; this is the spirit by which his soul is possessed. All work is done by a divine leading. He expresses lively indignation with the Scottish ministers, because they dared to speak of the battle of Dunbar, that marvellous dispensation, that mighty and strange appearance of God's, as a mere 'event.' So, too, he warns the Irish that if they resist they must expect what the providence of God will cast upon them, 'in that which is falsely called the Chance of War.'

III.

To displace Calvinism, the aims of Laud and of wiser men than Laud, required a new spiritual basis, and this was found in the doctrines of the Dutch Arminius. They had arisen in Holland at the beginning of the century, marking there a liberal and

rationalist reaction against Calvinistic rigour, and they were now welcomed by the Laudians as bringing a needed keystone to the quaking double arch of church and state. Arminianism had been condemned at the Synod of Dort (1619); but as a half-way house between catholicism on the one hand and Calvinism on the other, it met a want in the minds of a rising generation in England who disliked Rome and Geneva equally, and sought to found an Anglo-catholic school of their own. Laud concerned himself much less with the theology than with the latent politics of Arminianism, and in fact he usually denied that he was an Arminian. He said, as in truth many others in all times and places might have said, that the question was one beyond his faculties. It was as statesman rather than as keeper of the faith that he discerned the bearings of the great Dutch heresy, which was to permeate the Church of England for many a generation to come. In Arminianism Predestination was countered by Free Will; implacable Necessity by room for merciful Contingency; Man the Machine by Man the self-determining agent, using means, observing conditions. How it is that these strong currents and cross-currents of divinity land men at the two antipodes in politics, which seem out of all visible relation with divinity, we need not here attempt to trace. Unseen, non-logical, fugitive, and subtle are the threads and fine filaments of air that draw opinion to opinion. They are like the occult affinities of the alchemist, the curious sympathies of old physicians, or the attraction of hidden

magnets. All history shows us how theological ideas abound in political aspects to match, and Arminianism, which in Holland itself had sprung into vogue in connection with the political dispute between Barneveldt and Prince Maurice, rapidly became in England the corner-stone of faith in a hierarchy, a ceremonial church, and a monarchy. This is not the less true because in time the course of events drew some of the presbyterian phalanx further away from Calvinism than they would have thought possible in earlier days, when, like other puritans, they deemed Arminianism no better than a fore-court of popery, atheism, Socinianism, and all the other unholy shrines. To the student of opinions viewing the theological controversy of Cromwell's time with impartial eye, it is clear that, while Calvinism inspired incomparable energy, concentration, resolution, the rival doctrine covered a wider range of human nature, sounded more abiding depths, and comprehended better all the many varied conditions under which the 'poor worm' of Calvin and of Cromwell strives to make the best of itself and to work out the destinies of its tiny day. 'Truth,' said Arminius, 'even theological truth, has been sunk in a deep well, whence it cannot be drawn forth without much effort.' This the wise world has long found out. But these pensive sayings are ill suited for a time when the naked sword is out of its sheath. Each side believed that it was the possessor at least of truth enough to fight for; and what is peculiar in the struggle is that each party and sub-division of a party, from King Charles down to the Leveller and

the Fifth Monarchy Man, held his ideal of a church inseparably bound up with his ideal of the rightly ordered state.

IV.

In the sardonic dialogue upon these times which he called *Behemoth*, Hobbes says that it is not points necessary to salvation that have raised all the quarrels, but questions of authority and power over the church, or of profit and honour to churchmen. In other words, it has always been far less a question of what to believe, than of whom to believe. 'All human opinions, even those of theologians, have secret motives in the conduct and character of those who profess them' (Nisard). Hobbes's view may be thought to lower the dignity of conscience, yet he has many a chapter of Western history on his side. Disputes between orthodox and heretic have mixed up with mysteries of the faith all the issues of mundane policy and secular interest, all the strife of nationality, empire, party, race, dynasty. A dogma becomes the watchword of a faction; a ceremonial rite is made the ensign for the ambition of statesmen. The rival armies manœuvre on the theological or the ecclesiastical field, but their impulse like their purpose is political or personal. It was so in the metaphysical conflicts that tore the world in the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, and so it was in the controversies that swept over the sixteenth century and the seventeenth.

The centre of the storm in England now came to

be the question that has vexed Western Europe for so many generations down to this hour, the question who is to control the law and constitution of the church. The Pope and the Councils, answered the Guelph; the emperor, answered the Ghibelline. This was in the early Middle Age. In England and France the ruling power adopted a different line. There, kings and lawyers insisted that it was for the national or local government to measure and limit the authority of the national branch of the church universal. The same principle was followed by the first reformers in Germany and Switzerland, and by Henry VIII. and Cranmer. Then came a third view, not Guelph, nor Ghibelline, nor Tudor. The need for concentration in religion had not disappeared; it had rather become more practically urgent, for schism was followed by heresy and theological libertinism. Calvin at Geneva, a generation after Luther, claimed for the spiritual power independence of the temporal, just as the Pope did, but he pressed another scheme of religious organization. Without positively excluding bishops, he favoured the system by which the spiritual power was to reside in a council of presbyters, partly ministers, partly laymen. This was the scheme that the strenuous and powerful character of John Knox had succeeded in stamping upon Scotland. It was also the scheme that in England was the subject of the dispute in Elizabeth's time between Cartwright and Whitgift, and the main contention of that famous admonition of 1572 in which puritanism is usually supposed to have first taken definite shape. During the years when

Cromwell was attending to his business at St. Ives, this reorganization of the church upon the lines of the presbyterian churches abroad marked the direction in which serious minds were steadily looking. But with no violently revolutionary sense or intention. That slowly grew up with events. Decentralisation was the key in church reform as in political reform; the association of laity with bishops, as of commonalty with the king. Different church questions hovered in men's minds, sometimes vaguely, sometimes with precision, rising into prominence one day, dwindling away the next. Phase followed phase, and we call the whole the puritan revolution, just as we give the name of puritan alike to Baxter and Hugh Peters, to the ugly superstition of Nehemiah Wallington and the glory of John Milton, men with hardly a single leading trait in common. The Synod of Dort (1619), which some count the best date for the origin of puritanism, was twofold in its action: it ratified election by grace, and it dealt a resounding blow to episcopacy. Other topics of controversy indeed abounded as time went on. Vestment and ceremonial, the surplice or the gown, the sign of the cross at baptism, altar or table, sitting or kneeling, no pagan names for children, no anointing of kings or bishops,—all these and similar things were matter of passionate discussion, veiling grave differences of faith under what look like mere triflings about indifferent form. But the power and station of the bishop, his temporal prerogative, his coercive jurisdiction, his usurping arrogance, his subserviences to the crown, were what made men's hearts

hot within them. The grievance was not speculative but actual, not a thing of opinion but of experience and visible circumstance.

The Reformation had barely touched the authority of the ecclesiastical courts, though it had rendered that authority dependent upon the civil power. Down to the calling of the Long Parliament, the backslidings of the laity no less than of clergy, in private morals no less than in public observance, were by these courts vigilantly watched and rigorously punished. The penalties went beyond penitential impressions on mind and conscience, and clutched purse and person. The archdeacon was the eye of the bishop, and his court was as busy as the magistrate at Bow Street. In the twelve months ending at the date of the assembly of the Long Parliament, in the archdeacon's court in London no fewer than two thousand persons were brought up for tippling, sabbath-breaking, and incontinence. This Moral Police of the Church, as it was called, and the energy of its discipline, had no small share in the unpopularity of the whole ecclesiastical institution. Clarendon says of the clergymen of his day in well-known words, that 'they understand the least, and take the worst measure of human affairs, of all mankind that can write and read.' In no age have they been admired as magistrates or constables. The jurisdiction of the court of bishop or archdeacon did not exceed the powers of a Scottish kirk-session, but there was the vital difference that the Scottish court was democratic in the foundation of its authority, while the English court was a privileged annex of monarchy.

In loftier spheres the same aspirations after ecclesiastical control in temporal affairs waxed bold. An archbishop was made chancellor of Scotland. Juxon, the Bishop of London, was made Lord High Treasurer of England. No churchman, says Laud complacently, has had it since the time of Henry the Seventh. The Chief Justice goes down to the assizes in the west, and issues an injunction to the clergy to publish certain judicial orders against feasts and wakes. He is promptly called up by Laud for encroaching on church jurisdiction. The king commands the Chief Justice to recall the orders. He disobeys, and is again brought before the council, where Laud gives him such a rating that he comes out in tears.

The issue was raised in its most direct form (November 1628) in the imperious declaration prefixed to the thirty-nine articles in the Prayer Book of this day. The churchgoer of our time, as in a listless moment he may hit upon this dead page, should know what indignant fires it once kindled in the breasts of his forefathers. To them it seemed the signal for quenching truth, for silencing the inward voice, for spreading darkness over the sanctuary of the soul. The king announces that it is his duty not to suffer unnecessary disputations or questions to be raised. He commands all further curious search beyond the true, usual, literal meaning of the articles to be laid aside. Any university teacher who fixes a new sense to one of the articles will be visited by the displeasure of the king and the censure of the church; and it is for the convocation of

the bishops and clergy alone, with licence under the king's broad seal, to do whatever may be needed in respect of doctrine and discipline. Shortly before the accession of Charles, the same spirit of the hierarchy had shown itself in notable instructions. Nobody under a bishop or a dean was to presume to preach in any general auditory the deep points of predestination, election, reprobation, or of the universality, resistibility, or irresistibility of divine grace. But then these were the very points that thinking men were interested in. To remove them out of the area of public discussion, while the declaration about the articles was meant in due time to strip them of their Calvinistic sense, was to assert the royal supremacy in its most odious and intolerable shape. The result was what might have been expected. Sacred things and secular became one interest. Civil politics and ecclesiastical grew to be the same. Tonnage and poundage and predestination, ship-money and election, habeas corpus and justification by faith, all fell into line. The control of parliament over convocation was as cherished a doctrine as its control over the exchequer. As for toleration, this had hardly yet come into sight. Of respect for right of conscience as a conviction, and for free discussion as a principle, there was at this stage hardly more on one side than on the other. Without a qualm the very parliament that fought with such valour for the Petition of Right (March 1629) declared that anybody who should be seen to extend or introduce any opinion, whether papistical, Arminian, or other, disagreeing from the

true and orthodox church, should be deemed a capital enemy of the kingdom and commonwealth.

It was political and military events that forced a revolution in ecclesiastical ideas. Changing needs gradually brought out the latent social applications of a puritan creed, and on the double base rose a democratic party in a modern sense, the first in the history of English politics. Until the middle of the seventeenth century, independency was a designation hardly used, and Cromwell himself at first rejected it, perhaps with the wise instinct of the practical statesman against being too quick to assume a compromising badge before occasion positively forces. He was never much of a democrat, but the same may be said of many, if not most, of those whom democracy has used to do its business. Calvinism and Jacobinism sprang alike from France, from the same land of absolute ideals, and Cromwell was in time already to hear, in full blast from the grim lips of his military saints, the rights of man as all the world knew them so well a hundred and fifty years later.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INTERIM.

I.

WENTWORTH said in his early days that it was ill contending with the king outside of parliament. Acting on this maxim, the popular leaders, with the famous exception of Hampden, watched the king's despotic courses for eleven years (1629-40) without much public question. Duties were levied by royal authority alone. Monopolies were extended over all the articles of most universal consumption. The same sort of inquisition into title that Wentworth had practised in Ireland was applied in England, under circumstances of less enormity, yet so oppressively that the people of quality and honour, as Clarendon calls them, upon whom the burden of such proceedings mainly fell, did not forget it when the day of reckoning came. The Star Chamber, the Council, and the Court of High Commission, whose province affected affairs ecclesiastical, widened the area of their arbitrary jurisdiction, invaded the province of the regular courts, and inflicted barbarous punishments. Everybody knows the cases of Leighton, of Lilburne, of Prynne,

Burton, and Bastwick; how for writing books against prelacy, or play-acting, or Romish innovations by church dignitaries, men of education and learned professions were set in the pillory, had their ears cut off, their noses slit, their cheeks branded, were heavily fined, and flung into prison for so long as the king chose to keep them there.

Even these gross outrages on personal right did less to rouse indignation than the exaction of ship-money; nor did the exaction of the impost itself create so much alarm as the doctrines advanced by servile judges in its vindication, using 'a logic that left no man anything that he might call his own.' The famous Italian who has earned so bad a name in the world for lowering the standards of public virtue and human self-esteem, said that men sooner forget the slaying of a father than the taking of their property. But Charles, with the best will to play the Machiavellian if he had known how, never more than half learned the lessons of the part.

The general alarms led to passive resistance in Essex, Devonshire, Oxfordshire. A stout-hearted merchant of the City of London brought the matter on a suit for false imprisonment before the King's Bench. Here one of the judges actually laid down the doctrine that there is a rule of law and a rule of government, and that many things which might not be done by the rule of law may be done by the rule of government. In other words, law must be tempered by reason of state, which is as good as to say, no law. With more solemnity the lawfulness of the tax was

argued in the famous case of John Hampden for a fortnight (1637) before the twelve judges in the Exchequer Chamber. The result was equally fatal to that principle of no taxation without assent of parliament, to which the king had formally subscribed in passing the Petition of Right. The decision against Hampden contained the startling propositions that no statute can bar a king of his regality; that statutes taking away his royal power in defence of his kingdom are void; and that the king has an absolute authority to dispense with any law in cases of necessity, and of this necessity he must be the judge. This decision has been justly called one of the great events of English history.

Both the system of government and its temper were designated by Strafford and Laud under the cant watchword of Thorough. As a system it meant personal rule in the state, and an authority beyond the law courts in the church. In respect of political temper it meant the prosecution of the system through thick and thin, without fainting or flinching, without half-measures or timorous stumbling; it meant vigilance, dexterity, relentless energy. Such was Thorough. The counter-watchword was as good. If this was the battle-cry of the court, Root-and-Branch gradually became the inspiring principle of reform as it unconsciously drifted into revolution. Things went curiously slowly. The country in the face of this conspiracy against law and usage lay to all appearance profoundly still. No active resistance was attempted, or perhaps whispered. Pym kept unbroken silence. Of Crom-

well we have hardly a glimpse, and he seems to have taken the long years of interregnum as patiently as most of his neighbours. After some short unquietness of the people, says Clarendon, 'there quickly followed so excellent a composure throughout the whole kingdom, that the like peace and tranquillity for ten years was never enjoyed by any nation.' As we shall see, when after eleven years of misgovernment a parliament was chosen, it was found too moderate for its work.

It was in his native country that Charles first came into direct conflict with the religious fervour that was to destroy him. It only needed a spark to set in flames the fabric that king and archbishop were striving to rear in England. This spark flew over the border from Scotland, where Charles and Laud played with fire. In Scotland the Reformation had been a popular movement, springing from new and deepened religious experience and sense of individual responsibility in the hearts and minds of the common people. Bishops had not ceased to exist, but their authority was little more than shadow. By the most fatal of the many infatuations of his life, Charles tried (1637) to make the shadow substance, and to introduce canons and a service-book framed by Laud and his friends in England. Infatuation as it was, policy was the prompter. Charles, Strafford, and Laud all felt that the bonds between the three kingdoms were dangerously loose, slender, troublesome, and uncertain. As Cromwell too perceived when his time came, so these three understood the need for union on closer terms

between England, Scotland, and Ireland, and in accordance with the mental fashion of the time they regarded ecclesiastical uniformity as the key to political unity. Some Scottish historians have held that the royal innovations might have secured silent and gradual acquiescence in time, if no compulsion had been used. Patience, alas, is the last lesson that statesmen, rulers, or peoples can be brought to learn. As it was, the rugged Scots broke out in violent revolt, and it spread like flame through their kingdom. Almost the whole nation hastened to subscribe that famous National Covenant (February 27, 1638), which, even as we read it in these cool and far-off days, is still vibrating and alive with all the passion, the faithfulness, the wrath, that inspired the thousands of stern fanatics who set their hands to it. Its fierce enumeration of the abhorred doctrines and practices of Rome, its scornful maledictions on them, are hot with the same lurid flame as glows in the retaliatory lists of heresy issued from age to age from Rome itself. It is in this National Covenant of 1638 that we find ourselves at the heart and central fire of militant puritanism of the seventeenth century.

It is a curious thing that people in England were so little alive to what was going on in Scotland until the storm broke Nobody cared to know anything about Scotland, and they were both more interested and better informed as to what was passing in Germany or Poland than what happened across the border. The king handled Scottish affairs himself, with two or three Scottish nobles, and things had come to extremi-

ties before he opened them either to his counsellors or to the public in England. An armed force of covenanted Scots was set in motion toward the border. The king advanced to York, and there heard such news of the obstinacy of the rebels, of the disaffection of his own men to the quarrel, and of mischief that might follow from too close intercourse between Scots and English, that in his bewilderment he sanctioned the pacification of Berwick (June 1639). Disputes arose upon its terms; the Scots stubbornly extended their demands; Richelieu secretly promised help. Charles summoned Strafford to his side from Ireland, and that haughty counsellor told him that the Scots must be whipped into their senses again. Then (March 1640) he crossed back to Ireland for money and troops. War between the king and his Scots was certain, and it was the necessities of this war that led to the first step in saving the freedom of England.

II.

The king, in straits that left him no choice, sought aid from parliament. The Short Parliament, that now assembled, definitely opens the first great chapter of Revolution. After twenty years the Restoration closed it. Eighteen of these years are the public life of Cromwell. The movement, it is true, that seemed to begin in 1640, itself flowed from forces that had been slowly gathering since the death of Elizabeth, just as the Restoration closing one chapter prepared another that ended in 1688. But the twenty years from 1640

to 1660 mark a continuous journey, with definite beginning and end.

Cromwell was chosen one of the two members for the borough of Cambridge, 'the greatest part of the burgesses being present in the hall.' The Short Parliament sat only for three weeks (April 13 to May 5), and its first proceeding disclosed that eleven years had not cooled the quarrel. But the new parliament was essentially moderate and loyal, and this, as I have said, is another proof how little of general exasperation the eleven years of misrule without a parliament had produced. The veteran Coke was dead. Wentworth from firm friend had turned fierce enemy. Sir John Eliot was gone. The rigours of his prison-house in the Tower could not break that dauntless spirit, but they killed him. The king knew well what he was doing, and even carried his vindictiveness beyond death. Eliot's young son petitioned the king that he might carry the remains to Cornwall to lie with those of his ancestors. Charles wrote on the petition: 'Let Sir John Eliot's body be buried in the parish of that church where he died'; and his ashes lay unmarked in the chapel of the Tower.

Eliot's comrades were left with Pym at their head, and before long they warned the king in words destined to bear a terrible meaning that Eliot's blood still cried for vengeance or for repentance. The case had to some extent passed out of the hands of lawyers like Selden, and antiquaries like Cotton. Burke, in dealing with the American Revolution, makes some weighty comments upon the fact that the greater

number of the deputies sent to the first Revolutionary Congress were lawyers; and the legal character of the vindication of civil freedom from the accession of James I. or earlier, was not wholly lost at Westminster until the death of Charles I. But just as the lawyers had eclipsed the authority of the churchmen, so now they were themselves displaced by country gentlemen with gifts of parliamentary statesmanship. Of this new type Pym was a commanding instance. Pym was not below Eliot in zeal, and he was better than Eliot in measure, in judgment, and in sagacious instinct for action. He instantly sounded the note. The redress of grievances must go before the grant of a shilling either for the Scotch war or anything else. The claim of parliament over prerogative was raised in louder tones than had ever been heard in English constitutional history before. The king supposed that his proof that the Scots were trying to secure aid from France would kindle the flame of old national antipathies. England loved neither Frenchmen nor Scots. Nations, for that matter, do not often love one another. But the English leaders knew the emergency, knew that the cause of the Scots was their own, and were as ready to seek aid from Frenchmen as their successors a generation later were to seek aid from Dutchmen.[1] The perception every hour became clearer that the cause of the Scots was the cause of England, and with wise courage the

[1] Pym protested to the French minister in London his zeal for the interests of France, just as Sidney did later (Cousin, *Mme. de Chevreuse*, p. 167, n.).

patriots resolved to address the king against a war with his Scottish subjects. When this intention reached his ears, though he must have foreseen a move so certain to fit the parliamentary tactics of the hour, Charles flew into a passion, called a council for six o'clock the next morning, and, apparently with not more than the hesitating approval of Strafford, hurriedly determined to dissolve the parliament. As usual with him, this important decision was due to levity and not to calculation. Before night he found out his mistake, and was impatiently asking whether he could not recall the body that he had just dismissed.

The spirits of his opponents rose. Things, they argued, must be worse before they could be better. This parliament, they said, would never have done what was necessary to be done. Another parliament was inevitable; then their turn at last would come; then they would meet the king and his ministers with their own daring watchword; then in good earnest they would press on for Thorough with another and an unexpected meaning. For six months the king's position became every day more desperate. All the wheels of prerogative were set in motion to grind out gold. The sheriffs and the bailiffs squeezed only driblets of ship-money. Even the judges grew uneasy. Charles urged the city for loans, and threw aldermen into prison for refusing; but the city was the puritan stronghold, and was not to be frightened. He begged from France, from Spain, from the moneyed men of Genoa, and even from the Pope of Rome.

But neither pope nor king nor banker would lend to a borrower who had no security, financial, military, or political. He tried to debase the coinage, but people refused in fury to take copper for silver or threepence for a shilling.

It was idle for Strafford to tell either the London citizens or the Privy Council of the unsparing devices by which the King of France filled his treasury. Whether, if Charles had either himself possessed the iron will, the capacious grasp, the deep craft and policy of Richelieu, or had committed himself wholly into the hands of Strafford, who was endowed with some of Richelieu's essentials of mastery, the final event would have been different, is an interesting problem for historic rumination. As it was, the whole policy of Thorough fell into ruins. The trained bands were called out and commissions of array were issued, but they only spread distraction. The convocation of the clergy heightened the general irritation, not only by continuing to sit after the parliament had disappeared, but by framing new canons about the eastern position and other vexed points of ceremony; by proclaiming the order of kings to be sacred and of divine right; and finally by winding up their unlawful labours with the imposition upon large orders of important laymen of an oath never to assent to alter the government of the church 'by archbishops, bishops, deans, etc.'—an unhappy and random conclusion that provoked much rude anger and derision. This proceeding raised in its most direct form the central question whether under cover of the royal

supremacy the clergy were to bear rule independent of parliament. Even Laud never carried impolicy further. Rioters threatened the palace at Lambeth, and the archbishop though no coward was forced to flee for refuge to Whitehall. Meanwhile the king's military force, disaffected, ill-disciplined, ill-paid, and ill-accoutred, was no match for the invaders. The Scots crossed the Tyne, beat the English at Newburn (28th August), occupied Newcastle, and pushed on to Durham and the Tees. There seemed to be nothing to hinder their march to London. In London, wrote an observer, people were distracted as if the day of judgment were hourly expected.

Charles again recalled Strafford from Ireland, and that courageous genius acquired as much ascendancy as the levity of the king could allow. Never came any man, he says, to so lost a business: the army altogether unexercised and unprovided of all necessaries, the horse all cowardly, a universal affright in all, a general disaffection to the king's service, none sensible of his dishonour. Nothing could be gloomier. A parliament could not be avoided, as Pym and his friends had foreseen; and they brought to bear, both through their allies among the peers and by popular petitions, a pressure that Charles was powerless to resist. On the very eve of the final resolve, the king had some reason to suspect that what had already happened in Scotland might easily happen in England, and that if he did not himself call a parliament, one would be held without him.

The calling of the Long Parliament marked for the

king his first great humiliation. The depth of the humiliation only made future conflict more certain. Everybody knew that even without any deep-laid or sinister design Charles's own instability of nature, the secret convictions of his conscience, the intrinsic plausibilities of ancestral kingship, and the temptation of accident, would surely draw him on to try his fortune again. What was in appearance a step toward harmonious co-operation for the good government of the three kingdoms, was in truth the set opening of a desperate pitched battle, and it is certain that neither king nor parliament had ever counted up the chances of the future. Some would hold that most of the conspicuous political contests of history have been undertaken upon the like uncalculating terms.

CHAPTER V.

THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

I.

The elections showed how Charles had failed to gauge the humour of his people. Nearly three hundred of the four hundred and ninety members who had sat in the Short Parliament were chosen over again. Not one of those who had then made a mark in opposition was rejected, and the new members were believed almost to a man to belong in one degree or another to the popular party. Of the five hundred names that made up the roll of the House of Commons at the beginning of the Long Parliament, the counties returned only ninety-one, while the boroughs returned four hundred and five, and it was in the boroughs that hostility to the policy of the court was sharpest. Yet few of the Commons belonged to the trading class. It could not be otherwise when more than four-fifths of the population lived in the country, when there were only four considerable towns outside of London, and when the rural classes were supreme. A glance at the list shows us Widdringtons and Fenwicks from Northumber-

land; Curzons from Derbyshire; Curwens from Cumberland; Ashtons, Leighs, Shuttleworths, Bridgmans, from Lancashire; Lyttons and Cecils from Herts; Derings and Knatchbulls from Kent; Ingrams, Wentworths, Cholmeleys, Danbys, Fairfaxes, from the thirty seats in Yorkshire; Grenvilles, Edgcombes, Bullers, Rolles, Godolphins, Vyvyans, Trevors, Carews, from the four-and-forty seats of Cornwall.

These and many another historic name make the list to-day read like a catalogue of the existing county families, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the House of Lords now contains a smaller proportion of ancient blood than the famous lineages that figure in the roll of the great revolutionary House of Commons. It was essentially an aristocratic and not a popular house, as became only too clear five or six years later, when Levellers and Soldiers came into the field of politics. The Long Parliament was made up of the very flower of the English gentry and the educated laity. A modern conservative writer describes as the great enigma, the question how this phalanx of country gentlemen, of the best blood of England, belonging to a class of strongly conservative instincts and remarkable for their attachment to the crown, should have been for so long the tools of subtle lawyers and republican theorists, and then have ended by acquiescing in the overthrow of the parliamentary constitution, of which they had proclaimed themselves the defenders. It is curious too how many of the leaders came from that ancient seat of learning which was so soon to become and for so long remained the

centre of all who held for church and king. Selden was a member for the University of Oxford, and Pym, Fiennes, Marten, Vane, were all of them Oxford men, as well as Hyde, Digby, and others who in time passed over to the royal camp. A student of our day has remarked that these men collectively represented a larger relative proportion of the best intellect of the country, of its energy and talents, than is looked for now in the House of Commons. Whatever may be the reply to the delicate question so stated, it is at any rate true that of Englishmen then alive and of mature powers only two famous names are missing: Milton and Hobbes. When the parliament opened, Dryden was a boy at Westminster School; the future author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, a lad of twelve, was mending pots and kettles in Bedfordshire; and Locke, the future defender of the emancipating principles that now put on practical shape and power, was a boy of eight. Newton was not born until 1642, a couple of months after the first clash of arms at Edgehill.

In the early days of the Rebellion the peers had work to do not any less important than the Commons, and for a time, though they had none of the spirit of the old barons at Runnymede, they were in tolerable agreement with the views and temper of the lower House. The temporal peers were a hundred and twenty-three, and the lords spiritual twenty-six, of whom, however, when the parliament got really to business, no more than eighteen remained. Alike in public spirit and in attainments the average of the

House of Lords was undoubtedly high. Like other aristocracies in the seventeenth century, the English nobles were no friends to high-flying ecclesiastical pretensions, and like other aristocrats they were not without many jealousies and grievances of their own against the power of the crown. Another remark is worth making. Either history or knowledge of human nature might teach us that great nobles often take the popular side without dropping any of the pretensions of class in their hearts, and it is not mere peevishness when the royalist historian says that Lord Saye and Sele was as proud of his quality and as pleased to be distinguished from others by his title as any man alive.

Oliver Cromwell was again returned for the borough of Cambridge. The extraordinary circumstance has been brought out that at the meeting of the Long Parliament Cromwell and Hampden between them could count no fewer than seventeen relatives and connections; and by 1647 the figure had risen from seventeen to twenty-three. When the day of retribution came eight years later, out of the fifty-nine names on the king's death-warrant, ten were kinsmen of Oliver, and out of the hundred and forty of the king's judges sixteen were more or less closely allied to him. Oliver was now in the middle of his forty-second year, and his days of homely peace had come once for all to an end. Everybody knows the picture of him drawn by a young royalist; how one morning he 'perceived a gentleman speaking, very ordinarily apparelled in a plain cloth suit made by an ill country

tailor, with plain linen, not very clean, and a speck or two of blood upon his little band; his hat without a hat-band; his stature of a good size; his sword stuck close to his side; his countenance swollen and reddish; his voice sharp and untuneable, his eloquence full of fervour. . . . I sincerely profess it lessened much my reverence unto that great council, for this gentleman was very much hearkened unto.'

Another recorder of the time describes 'his body as well compact and strong; his stature of the average height; his head so shaped as you might see in it both a storehouse and shop of a vast treasury of natural parts. His temper exceeding fiery; but the flame of it kept down for the most part, as soon allayed with these moral endowments he had. He was naturally compassionate toward objects in distress, even to an effeminate measure; though God had made him a heart wherein was left little room for any fear but what was due to Himself, of which there was a large proportion, yet did he exceed in tenderness toward sufferers.'

'When he delivered his mind in the House,' says a third, going beyond the things that catch the visual eye, 'it was with a strong and masculine excellence, more able to persuade than to be persuaded. His expressions were hardy, opinions resolute, asseverations grave and vehement, always intermixed (Andronicus-like) with sentences of scripture, to give them the greater weight, and the better to insinuate into the affections of the people. He expressed himself with some kind of passion, but with such a commanding,

wise deportment till, at his pleasure, he governed and swayed the House, as he had most times the leading voice. Those who find no such wonders in his speeches may find it in the effect of them.'

We have yet another picture of the inner qualities of the formidable man, drawn by the skilled pencil of Clarendon. In the early days of the parliament, Cromwell sat on a parliamentary committee to examine a case of enclosure of waste in his native county. The townsmen, it was allowed, had come in a riotous and warlike manner with sound of drum and had beaten down the obnoxious fences. Such doings have been often heard of, but perhaps not half so often as they should have been, even down to our own day. Lord Manchester, the purchaser of the lands enclosed, issued writs against the offenders, and at the same time both he and the aggrieved commoners presented petitions to parliament. Cromwell moved for a reference to a committee. Hyde was chairman, and afterwards was often heard to describe the demeanour of his turbulent colleague. The scene brings Oliver too vividly before us ever to be omitted.

'Cromwell,' says Hyde, 'ordered the witnesses and petitioners in the method of the proceeding, and seconded and enlarged upon what they said with great passion; and the witnesses and persons concerned, who were a very rude kind of people, interrupted the council and witnesses on the other side with great clamour when they said anything that did not please them; so that Mr. Hyde was compelled to use some sharp reproofs and some threats to reduce them to such a temper that the business might be quietly heard. Cromwell

in great fury reproached the chairman for being partial, and that he discountenanced the witnesses by threatening them; the other appealed to the committee, which justified him, and declared that he behaved himself as he ought to do; which more inflamed him [Cromwell], who was already too much angry. When upon any mention of matter of fact, or the proceeding before and at the enclosure, the Lord Mandevil desired to be heard, and with great modesty related what had been done, or explained what had been said, Mr. Cromwell did answer and reply upon him with so much indecency and rudeness, and in language so contrary and offensive, that every man would have thought that, as their natures and their manners were as opposite as it is possible, so their interest could never have been the same. In the end, his whole carriage was so tempestuous, and his behaviour so insolent, that the chairman found himself obliged to reprehend him, and tell him that if he [Cromwell] proceeded in the same manner, he [Hyde] would presently adjourn the committee, and the next morning complain to the House of him.'

Such was the outer Cromwell.

The twofold impulse of the times has been already indicated, and here is Cromwell's exposition of it: 'Of the two greatest concernments that God hath in the world, the one is that of religion and of the preservation of the professors of it; to give them all due and just liberty; and to assert the truth of God. The other thing cared for is the civic liberty and interest of the nation. Which, though it is, and I think it ought to be, subordinate to the more peculiar interest of God, yet it is the next best God hath given men in this world; and if well cared for, it is better than any rock to fence men in their other interests. Besides, if any whosoever think the interests of Christians and the interest of the nation

inconsistent, I wish my soul may never enter into their secrets.'

Firm in his belief in direct communion with God, a sovereign power unseen; hearkening for the divine voice, his steps guided by the divine hand, yet he moved full in the world and in the life of the world. Of books, as we have seen, he knew little. Of the yet more invigorating education of responsible contact with large affairs, he had as yet had none. Into men and the ways of men, he had enjoyed no opportunity of seeing far. Destined to be one of the most famous soldiers of his time, he had completed over two-thirds of his allotted span, and yet he had never drilled a troop, nor seen a movement in a fight, or the leaguer of a stronghold or a town. He was both cautious and daring; both patient and swift; both tender and fierce; both sober and yet willing to face tremendous risks; both cool in head and yet with a flame of passion in his heart. His exterior rough and unpolished, and with an odd turn for rustic buffooneries, he had the quality of directing a steady, penetrating gaze into the centre of a thing. Nature had endowed him with a power of keeping his own counsel, that was sometimes to pass for dissimulation; a keen eye for adjusting means to ends, that was often taken for craft; and a high-hearted insistence on determined ends, that by those who love to think the worst was counted as guilty ambition. The foundation of the whole was a temperament of energy, vigour, resolution. Cromwell was to show himself one of the men who are born to force great causes to the proof.

II.

Before this famous parliament had been many days assembled, occurred one of the most dramatic moments in the history of English freedom. Strafford was at the head of the army at York. When a motion for a grand committee on Irish affairs had been carried, his friends in London felt that it was he who was struck at, and by an express they sent him peremptory warning. His friends at York urged him to stay where he was. The king and queen, however, both pressed him to come, and both assured him that if he came he should not suffer in his person, his honour, or his fortune. Strafford, well knowing his peril but undaunted, quickly posted up to London, resolved to impeach his enemies of high treason for inviting the Scots into the kingdom. Historians may argue for ever about the legalities of what had happened, but the two great actors were under no illusions. The only question was who should draw his sword first and get home the swiftest thrust. The game was a terrible one with fierce stakes, *My head or thy head*; and Pym and Strafford knew it.

The king received his minister with favour, and again swore that he would protect him. No king's word was ever worse kept. Strafford next morning went down to the House of Lords, and was received with expressions of honour and observance. Unluckily for him, he was not ready with his articles of charge, and in a few hours he was too late. That afternoon the blow was struck. Pym, who had as marked a

genius for quick and intrepid action as any man that ever sat in the House of Commons, rose and said there was matter of weight to be imparted. The lobby without was quickly cleared, the door was locked, and the key laid upon the table. The discussion on Strafford's misdeeds in Ireland, and in his government as president of the north, went on until between four and five in the afternoon. Then Pym, with some three hundred members behind him, passed through a throng who had been gathered by the tidings that new things were on foot, and on reaching the bar of the House of Lords he told them that by virtue of a command from the Commons in parliament, and in the name of all the Commons of England, he accused Thomas, Earl of Strafford, of high treason, and desired his committal to prison for a very few days until they produced the articles and grounds of their accusation. Strafford was in the palace at Whitehall during these proceedings. The news fell like a thunderbolt upon his friends around him, but he kept a composed and confident demeanour. 'I will go,' he said, 'and look mine accusers in the face.' 'With speed he comes to the House; he calls rudely at the door; the keeper of the black rod opens; his lordship, with a proud, glooming countenance, makes towards his place at the board-head; but at once many bid him rid the House.' When the Lords had settled their course, he was recalled, commanded to kneel at the bar, and informed of the nature of his delinquency. He went away in custody. 'Thus he, whose greatness in the morning owned a power over two kingdoms, in

the evening straitened his person betwixt two walls.' From the Tower, whither he was speedily conveyed, he wrote to his wife:—

> Albeit all be done against me that art and malice can devise, with all the rigour possible, yet I am in great inward quietness, and a strong belief God will deliver me out of all these troubles. The more I look into my case, the more hope I have, and sure if there be any honour and justice left, my life will not be in danger; and for anything else, time, I trust, will salve any other hurt which can be done me. Therefore hold up your heart, look to the children and your house, let me have your prayers, and at last, by God's good pleasure, we shall have our deliverance.

The business lasted for some five months. The actual trial began on March 22 (1641), and went on for fourteen days. The memorable scene was the assertion on the grandest scale of the deep-reaching principle of the responsibility of ministers, and it was the opening of the last and greatest of the civil wars within the kingdom. A shrewd eye-witness has told us how people began to assemble at five in the morning, and filled the hall by seven; how the august culprit came at eight, sometimes excusing delay by contrariety of wind and tide, in a barge from the Tower with a guard of musketeers and halberdiers, and he usually found the king half an hour before him in an unofficial box by the side of the queen. 'It was daily,' says Baillie the covenanter, 'the most glorious assembly the isle can afford; yet the gravity not such as I expected; oft great clamour without about the doors; in the intervals while Strafford was making ready for answers, the Lords got always to

their feet, walked and clattered; the Lower House men too loud clattering; after ten hours, much public eating, not only of confections but of flesh and bread, bottles of beer and wine going thick from mouth to mouth without cups, and all this in the king's eye.'

With the impeachment of Strafford the whole position comes directly into view. He divided universal hatred with his confederate the archbishop, who had been impeached a few days after himself. He was the symbol and impersonation of all that the realm had for many years suffered under. In England the name of Strafford stood for lawless exactions, arbitrary courts, the free quartering of troops, and the standing menace of a papist enemy from the other side of St. George's Channel. The Scots execrated him as the instigator of energetic war against their country and their church. Ireland in all its ranks and classes having through its parliament applauded him as a benefactor, now with strange versatility cursed him as a tyrant. It was the weight of all these converging animosities that destroyed him. 'Three whole kingdoms,' says a historian of the time, 'were his accusers, and eagerly sought in one death a recompense of all their sufferings.'

Viewed as a strictly judicial proceeding, the trial of Strafford was as hollow as the yet more memorable trial in the same historic hall eight years later. The expedients for a conviction that satisfied our Lords and Commons were little better than the expedients of the revolutionary tribunal in Jacobin Paris at the

close of the next century. The charges were vague, general, and saturated with questionable inference. The evidence, on any rational interpretation of the facts, was defective at almost every point. That Strafford had been guilty of treason in any sense in which a sound tribunal going upon strict law could have convicted him, nobody now maintains or perhaps even then maintained. Oliver St. John, in arguing the attainder before the Lords, put the real point. 'Why should he have law himself who would not that others should have any? We indeed give laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase; but we give none to wolves and foxes, but knock them on the head wherever they are found, because they are beasts of prey.' This was the whole issue—not law, but *My head or thy head*. In revolutions it has often been that there is nothing else for it; and there was nothing else for it here. But the revolutionary axe is double-edged, and so men found it when the Restoration came.

Meanwhile, the one thing for Pym was to make sure. That Strafford designed to subvert what, in the opinion of the vast majority of Englishmen, were the fundamental liberties of the realm, there was no moral doubt though there was little legal proof. That he had earned the title of a public enemy; that his continued eligibility for a place in the councils of the king would have been a public danger, and his escape from punishment a public disaster; and that if he had not been himself struck down, he would have been the first to strike down the champions of free

government against military monarchy,—these are the propositions that make the political justification of the step taken by the Commons when, after fourteen sittings, they began to fear that impeachment might fail them. They resorted to the more drastic proceeding of a bill of attainder. They were surrounded by imminent danger. They knew of plots to bring the royal army down upon the parliament. They heard whispers of the intention of the French king to send over a force to help his sister, and of money coming from the Prince of Orange, the king's new son-in-law. Tales came of designs for Strafford's escape from the Tower. Above all was the peril that the king, in his desperation and in spite of the new difficulties in which such a step would land him, might suddenly dissolve them. It was this pressure that carried the bill of attainder through parliament, though Pym and Hampden at first opposed it, and though Selden, going beyond Hyde and Falkland who abstained, actually voted against it. Men's apprehensions were on their sharpest edge. Then it was that the Earl of Essex, rejecting Hyde's arguments for merely banishing Strafford, gave him the pithy reply, 'Stone-dead hath no fellow.'

Only one man could defeat the bill, and this was Strafford's master. The king's assent was as necessary for a bill of attainder as for any other bill, and if there was one man who might have been expected to refuse assent, it was the king. The bill was passed on a Saturday (May 8). Charles took a day to consider. He sent for various advisers, lay and episcopal.

Archbishop Usher and Juxon told him, like honest men, that if his conscience did not consent, he ought not to act, and that he knew Strafford to be innocent. In truth Charles a few days before had appealed to the Lords not to press upon his conscience, and told them that on his conscience he could not condemn his minister of treason. Williams, sharper than his two brother prelates, invented a distinction between the king's public conscience and his private conscience, not unlike that which was pressed upon George III. on the famous occasion in 1800. He urged that though the king's private conscience might acquit Strafford, his public conscience ought to yield to the opinion of the judges. Strafford had written to him a week before, and begged him to pass the bill. 'Sir, my consent shall more acquit you herein to God than all the world can do besides. To a willing man there is no injury done; and as by God's grace I forgive all the world with calmness and meekness of infinite contentment to my dislodging soul, so, sir, to you I can give the life of this world with all the cheerfulness imaginable, in the just acknowledgment of your exceeding favours.' Little worthy was Charles of so magnanimous a servant. Attempts have been made at palliation. The queen, it is said, might have been in danger from the anger of the multitude. 'Let him,' it is gravely enjoined upon us, 'who has seen wife and child and all that he holds dear exposed to imminent peril, and has refused to save them by an act of baseness, cast the first stone at Charles.' The equity of history is both a noble and a scientific

doctrine, but its decrees are not to be settled by the domestic affections. Time has stamped the abandonment of Strafford with an ignominy that cannot be washed out. It is the one act of his life for which Charles himself professed remorse. 'Put not your trust in princes,' exclaimed Strafford when he learned the facts. 'I dare look death in the face,' he said stoically, as he passed out of the Tower gate to the block; 'I thank God I am not afraid of death, but do as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to my bed.' 'His mishaps,' said his confederate, Laud, 'were that he groaned under the public envy of the nobles, and served a mild and gracious prince who knew not how to be nor to be made great.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVE OF THE WAR.

I.

When Mary Stuart in 1567 rode away a captive from Carberry Hill, she seized the hand of Lord Lindsay, her foe, and holding it aloft in her grasp, she swore by it, 'I will have your head for this, so assure you.' This was in Guise-Tudor blood, and her grandson's passion for revenge if less loud was not less deep. The destruction of Strafford and the humiliation that his own share in that bitter deed had left in the heart of the king darkened whatever prospect there might at any time have been of peace between Charles and the parliamentary leaders. He was one of the men vindictive in proportion to their impotence, who are never beaten with impunity. His thirst for retaliation was unquenchable, as the popular leaders were well aware, as they were well aware too of the rising sources of weakness in their own ranks. Seeing no means of escape, the king assented to a series of reforming bills that swept away the Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission, the assumed right to levy ship-money, and the other more flagrant civil

grievances of the reign. The verdicts of Hallam have grown pale in the flash and glitter of later historians, yet there is much to be said for his judgment that all the useful and enduring part of the reforming work of the Long Parliament was mainly completed within the first nine months of its existence. These were all measures obviously necessary for the restoration or renovation of the constitution, and they stood the test of altered times. Most of the rest was writ in water.

Charles went further and into a new region in agreeing to a law that guaranteed the assembly of a parliament at least once in three years, whether with the king's consent or without. Further still he went when he assented to an act for prolonging the life of the sitting parliament until it should vote for its own dissolution (May 11, 1641). Here it was that reform passed into revolution. To deprive the monarch of the right of taking the sense of his people at his own time, and to make dissolution depend upon an act of parliament passed for the occasion, was to go on to ground that had never been trodden before. It convinced the king more strongly than ever that to save his crown, in the only sense in which he thought a crown worth wearing, he would have to fight for it. Yet it was he who had forced the quarrel to this pitch. Pym, Cromwell, and the rest were not the men to forget his lawless persecution of Eliot; nor that Charles had extinguished parliaments for eleven years; nor how, even after his return to the constitution only the year before, he had petulantly broken the Short

Parliament after a session of no more than three weeks. It would have been mere blindness to mistake what was actually passing before their eyes. They knew of plot upon plot. In April Pym had come upon one design among the courtiers to bring up the northern army to overawe the parliament. Almost before this was exposed, a second conspiracy of court and officers was known to be on foot. It was the Scots who now, as so often, held the key of the position. Charles's design was manifestly to win such popularity and influence in Scotland, that he might be allowed to use the army of that kingdom in concert with his own army in the north of England to terrify his mutinous parliament and destroy its leaders. Such a policy was futile from its foundation; as if the Scots, who cared for their church far more than they cared for his crown, were likely to lend themselves to the overthrow of the only power that could secure what they cherished most, against an unmasked enmity bent on its destruction. The defeat of the English parliament must bring with it the discomfiture of Christ's kirk in Scotland. In the month of August Charles left London to visit his northern kingdom. The vigilance of the parliament men was not for an instant deceived. They promptly guessed that the purpose of his journey must be to seek support for reaction, and his rejection of their remonstrances against his absence deepened their suspicion.

They had indeed more reasons than this for uneasiness. The first of those moments of fatigue had

come, that attend all revolutions. At the beginning of civil discord boldness carries all before it; but a settled community, especially one composed of Englishmen, soon looks for repose. Hopes are seen to be tinged with illusion, the pulse slackens, and the fever cools. The nation was after all still royalist, and had not the king redressed their wrongs? Why not rest? This was the question of the indolent, the overcautious, the short-sighted, and the fearful. Worse than fatigue, the spirit of party now raised its questionable crest. Philosophers have never explained how it comes that faction is one of the inborn propensities of man; nor why it should always be that, even where solid reasons are absent, almost any distinctions, however slender, fleeting, fanciful, or frivolous, will yet serve to found a party difference upon. 'Zeal for different opinions as to religion or government, whether those opinions be practical or speculative; attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; devotion to persons whose fortunes have kindled human interests and passions,—these things have at all times so inflamed men as to render them far more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to work together for the common good.' Such is the language of Madison about a singular law of human things, that has made the spirit of sect and party the master-key of so many in the long catalogue of the perversities of history.

It was on the church and its reform that the strenuous phalanx of constitutional freedom began to

scatter. The Long Parliament had barely been a month in session before the religious questions that were then most alive of all in the most vigorous minds of the time, and were destined to lead, by so many divisions and subdivisions, to distraction in counsel and chaos in act, began rapidly to work. Cromwell did not hold the helmsman's place so long as Pym survived. Clarendon said of Oliver that his parts seemed to be raised by the demands of great station, 'as if he had concealed his faculties until he had occasion to use them.' In other words, Cromwell fixed his eyes upon the need of the hour, used all his energy and devotion in meeting it, and let that suffice. Nor in men of action is there any better mark of a superior mind. But that Cromwell was 'much hearkened to from the first' is indicated by the fact that he was specially placed upon eighteen of the committees into which the House divided itself for the consideration of the multitude of grievances clamouring for attention from all the shires and boroughs in the land. He moved (Dec. 30, 1640) the second reading of the bill for a sitting of parliament every year, and he took a prominent part in the committee which transformed the bill into an enactment that a parliament should meet at least once in three years.

Going deeper, he was one of the secret instigators of the first parliamentary move of the Root-and-Branch men against the bishops, and this move was the first step in the development of party spirit within ranks that had hitherto been staunchly of one

mind. Everybody was in favour of church reform, but nobody at this stage, and certainly not Cromwell, had any clear ideas either of the principle on which reform should proceed, or of the system that ought to be adopted. On those ecclesiastical institutions that were what mattered most, they were most at sea. The prevailing temper was at first moderate. To exclude the higher clergy from meddling as masters in secular affairs, to stir up the slackness of the lower clergy; to nullify canons imposed without assent of parliament; to expunge from the prayer-book things calculated to give offence—such were the early demands. A bill passed through the Commons for removing the bishops from the House of Lords. The Lords threw it out (June 1641), and as usual rejection of a moderate reform was followed by a louder cry for wholesale innovation. The constitutionalists fell back, and men advanced to the front with the root of the matter in them. A month after the Lords refused the bishops bill, the Commons passed the Root-and-Branch bill. The Root-and-Branch men, besides denouncing the liturgy as framed out of the Romish breviary and mass-book, declared government by bishops to be dangerous both to church and commonwealth, to be the main cause and occasion of many foul evils. Only one thing was to be done with a government so evil: with all its dependencies, roots, and branches, it should be forthwith swept away. What was to be the substitute, nobody knew, and when it came to that sovereign and most wholesome test for all reformers—the conversion of an opinion

into the clauses of a bill—neither Cromwell nor Vane nor any other of the reformers had anything practicable to propose.

Root-and-Branch was in time confronted by rival proposals for moderate episcopacy. Neither Root-and-Branch nor moderate episcopacy reached an effective stage in either House, but the action taken upon them split the parliament in two, one side for episcopacy, and the other against it. Such were the two policies before men on the eve of the civil war. Then, by and by, this division gradually adjusted itself with disastrous aptness to the other and parallel conflict between crown and parliament; the partisans of bishops slowly turned into partisans of the king, and episcopalians became one with royalists. The wiser divines tried to reconcile the rival systems. Usher, Archbishop of Armagh, suggested that the bishop should have a council of elders. Bramhall, his successor in the metropolitan see, whom Cromwell called the Irish Laud, admitted the validity of presbyterian orders, and thought the German superintendents almost as good as bishops. Baxter, though he afterwards declined a mitre, yet always held out a hand to prelacy. Leighton, one of the few wholly attractive characters of those bitter-flavoured times, was closely intimate with French Jansenists, of whom Hume truly says that they were but half catholics; and Leighton was wont to declare that he would rather turn one single man to be truly of a serious mind, than turn a whole nation to mere outer conformity, and he saw no reason why there should not be a

conjunction between bishops and elders. For none of these temperate and healing ideals was the time ripe. Their journey was swiftly bringing men into a torrid zone. The Commons resolved that communion-tables should be removed from the east end of churches, that chancels should be levelled, that scandalous pictures of any of the persons of the Trinity should be taken away, and all images of the Virgin Mary demolished. The consequence was a bleak and hideous defacement of beautiful or comely things in most of the cathedrals and great churches all over England. Altar-rails and screens were destroyed, painted windows were broken, figures of stone and marble ground to powder, and pictures cut into shreds. These vandalisms shocked both reverential sentiment and the police feeling for good order, and they widened the alienation of parliamentary parties. Before the end of the autumn, Hyde and Falkland had become king's friends.

Hyde, more familiarly known by his later style of Lord Clarendon, stands among the leading figures of the time, with a strong and direct judgment, much independence of character, and ideas of policy that were coherent and his own. His intellectual horizons were wide, he had good knowledge of the motives of men, and understood the handling of large affairs. Even where he does not carry us with him, there is nobody of the time whose opinion is much better worth knowing. We may even give him the equivocal credit that is due to the Clarendonian type of conservative in all times and places, that if only things could

have been different, he would not have been in the wrong. His ideal in church and state, viewed in the light of the event, did not ultimately miscarry. The settlement of 1688 would have suited him well enough, and in his best days he had much of the temper of Somers. But he and Falkland had either too little nerve, or too refining a conscience, or too unstable a grasp, for the navigation of the racing floods around them. They were doubtless unwilling converts to the court party, but when a convert has taken his plunge he must endure all the unsuspected foolishness and all the unteachable zealotry of his new comrades—an experience that has perhaps in all ages given many a mournful hour to generous natures.

It was now that a majority with a policy found itself confronted by an opposition fluctuating in numbers, but still making itself felt, in the fashion that has since become the familiar essence of parliamentary life all the world over. As we shall see, a second and deeper line of party demarcation was soon to follow. Meanwhile the division between parties in the Commons was speedily attended by disagreement between Commons and Lords, and this widened as the rush of events became more pressing. Among the Lords, too, Charles now found friends. It was his own fault if he did not discover, in the differences among his enemies upon the church, a chance of recovering his own shattered authority in the state. To profit by these differences was his persistent game for seven years to come. Seldom has any game in political manœuvre been more unskilfully played.

The parliament had adjourned early in September, the king still absent in Scotland. The superintendence of affairs was carried on by a committee, a sort of provisional government of which Pym was the mainspring. Hampden had gone to Edinburgh as a parliamentary commissioner to watch the king. The two Houses reassembled a few days before the end of October amid intense disquiet. The growing tension made the popular leaders at once more energetic and more deliberate. Shortly before the adjournment the prayer-book had been attacked, and Cromwell supported the attack. Bishops still furnished the occasion, if they were not the cause, of political action. Root-and-Branch was dropped, and a bill was renewed for excluding the clergy from temporal authority and depriving the bishops of their seats among the Lords. Then followed a bill for suspending the bishops from parliamentary powers in the meantime. Cromwell by the side of Pym spoke keenly for it, on the ground that the bishops by their six-and-twenty votes should not be suffered to obstruct the legislative purposes of a majority of the two Houses.

Charles, writing from Scotland (October), had announced a momentous resolution. 'I command you,' he said to his Secretary of State, 'to assure all my servants that I am constant to the discipline and doctrine of the Church of England established by Queen Elizabeth and my father, and that I resolve by the grace of God to die in the maintenance of it.' The pledge was more tragic than perhaps he knew, but when the time came he redeemed it to the

letter. As a sign that he was in earnest, he proceeded to fill up five bishoprics that happened to be vacant, and in four of them he planted divines who had in convocation been parties to the unlawful canons on which the Commons were at the moment founding an impeachment of treason. This was either one of his many random imprudences, or else a calculated challenge. Cromwell blazed out instantly against a step that proclaimed the king's intention of upholding episcopacy in all its pretensions. Suddenly an earthquake shook the ground on which they stood, and threw the combatants into unexpected postures.

II.

The event that now happened inflamed the public mind in England with such horror as had in Europe followed the Sicilian Vespers, or the massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the slaughter of the Protestants in the passes of the Valtelline by the Spanish faction only twenty-one years before. In November the news reached London that the Irish had broken out in bloody rebellion. The story of this dreadful rising has been the subject of vehement dispute among historians ever since, and even in our own day has been discussed with unhistoric heat. Yet the broad facts are sufficiently clear to any one capable of weighing the testimony of the time without prejudice of race or faith; and they stand out in cardinal importance in respect both to leading episodes in the career of Cromwell, and to the general politics of the Revolution.

The causes of rebellion in Ireland lay deep. Confiscations and exterminations had followed in deadly succession, and ever since the merciless suppression of the rising of the Ulster chieftains in the reign of Elizabeth, the elements of another violent outbreak had been sullenly and surely gathering. Enormous confiscations had been followed by the plantation of Scotch and English colonists, and the clearance of the old owners and their people. The colonist thought no more of rights and customs in the aboriginal population, than if they had been the Matabele or Zulu of a later time. Besides the great sweeping forfeitures, rapacious adventurers set busily to work with eagle eyes to find out flaws in men's title to individual estates, and either the adventurer himself acquired the estate, or forced the possessor to take a new grant at an extortionate rent. People were turned off their land without compensation and without means of subsistence. Active men left with nothing to do, and nothing of their own to live upon, wandered about the country, apt upon the least occasion of insurrection or disturbance to be heads and leaders of outlaws and rebels. Strafford (1632-40), in spite of his success upon the surface, had aggravated the evil at its source. He had brought the finances into good order, introduced discipline into the army, driven pirates out of the channel, imported flax-seed from Holland and linen-weavers from France. But nobody blessed or thanked him, everybody dreaded the weight of his hand, and in such circumstances dread is but another word for hate. The genius of

fear had perfected the work of fear; but the whole structure of imperial power rested on shaking bog. The great inquisition into titles had alarmed and exasperated the old English. The northern presbyterians resented his proceedings for religious uniformity. The catholics were at heart in little better humour; for though Strafford was too deep a statesman to attack them in full front, he undoubtedly intended in the fullness of time to force them as well as the presbyterians into the same uniformity as his master had designed for Scotland. He would, however, have moved slowly, and in the meantime he both practised connivance with the catholic evasion of the law, and encouraged hopes of complete toleration. So did the king. But after Strafford had gone to his doom in England, puritan influences grew more powerful, and the catholics perceived that all the royal promises of complete toleration, like those for setting a limit to the time for inquisition into titles of land, were so many lies. No Irish conspirator could have laid the trâin for rebellion more effectively. If any one cares to find some more reasonable explanation of Irish turbulence than the simple theory that this unfortunate people, in the modern phrase, have a double dose of original sin, he should read the story how the O'Byrnes were by chicane, perjury, imprisonment, martial law, application of burning gridirons, branding-irons, and strappado, cheated out of their lands.

While these grievances were rankling all over Ireland, and the undying animosities of the dispossessed

chieftains of Ulster were ready to break into flame, priests and friars from Spain had swarmed into the land and kindled fresh excitement. No papist conspiracy was needed to account for what soon happened. When one deep spring of discontent mounts to a head and overflows, every other source becomes a tributary. Maddened as they were by wholesale rapine, driven forth from land and homes, outraged in every sentiment belonging to their old rude organization, it is no wonder if the native Irish and their leaders of ancient and familiar name found an added impulse in passion for their religious faith.

At last that happened which the wiser heads had long foreseen. After many weeks of strange stillness, in an instant the storm burst. The Irish in Ulster suddenly (October 23, 1641) fell upon the English colonists, the invaders of their lands. The fury soon spread, and the country was enveloped in the flames of a conflagration fed by concentrated sense of ancient wrong, and all the savage passions of an oppressed people suddenly broken loose upon its oppressors. Agrarian wrong, religious wrong, insolence of race, now brought forth their poisonous fruit. A thousand murderous atrocities were perpetrated on one side, and they were avenged by atrocities as hideous on the other. Every tale of horror in the insurgents can be matched by horror as diabolic in the soldiery. What happened in 1641 was in general features very like what happened in 1798, for the same things come to pass in every conflict where ferocious hatred in a persecuted caste meets the ferocious pride and con-

tempt of its persecutors. The main points are reasonably plain. There is no question by whom the sanguinary work was first begun. There is little question that it was not part of a premeditated and organized design of indiscriminate massacre, but was inevitably attendant upon a violent rising against foreign despoilers. There is no question that though in the beginning agrarian or territorial, the rising soon drew after it a fierce struggle between the two rival Christian factions. There is little question that, after the first shock, Parsons and his allies in authority acted on the cynical anticipation that the worse the rebellion, the richer would be the forfeitures. There is no question that the enormity of crime was the subject of exaggeration, partly natural and inevitable, partly incendiary and deliberate. Nor finally is there any question that, even without exaggeration, it is the most barbarous and inhuman chapter that stains the domestic history of the kingdom. The total number of protestants slain in cold blood at the outbreak of the rebellion has been fixed at various figures from four thousand to forty, and the latest serious estimate puts it at five-and-twenty thousand during the first three or four years. The victims of the retaliatory slaughter by protestants upon catholics were countless, but Sir William Petty thinks that more than half a million Irish of both creeds perished between 1641 and 1652.

The fated international antipathy between English and Irish, that like a volcano is sometimes active, sometimes smouldering and sullen, now broke forth

in liquid fire. The murderous tidings threw England into frenzy. It has been compared to the fury with which the American colonists regarded the use of Red Indians by the government of King George; or to the rage and horror that swept over the country for a moment when the tidings of Cawnpore arrived; and I need not describe it. The air was thick, as is the way in revolutions, with frantic and irrational suspicion. The catastrophe in Ireland fitted in with the governing moods of the hour, and we know only too well how simple and summary are the syllogisms of a rooted distrust. Ireland was papist, and this was a papist rising. The queen was a papist, surrounded at Somerset House by the same black brood as those priests of Baal who on the other side of St. George's Channel were described as standing by while their barbarous flock slew old men and women wholesale and in cold blood, dashed out the brains of infants against the walls in sight of their wretched parents, ran their skeans like Red Indians into the flesh of little children, and flung helpless protestants by scores at a time over the bridge at Portadown. Such was the reasoning, and the damning conclusion was clear. This was the queen's rebellion, and the king must be her accomplice. Sir Phelim O'Neil, the first leader of the Ulster rebellion, declared that he held a commission from the king himself, and the story took quick root. It is now manifest that Charles was at least as much dismayed as any of his subjects; yet for the rest of his life he could never wipe out the fatal theory of his guilt.

That catholic Ireland should prefer the king to the parliament for a master was to be expected. Puritanism with the Old Testament in its hand was never an instrument for the government of a community predominantly catholic, and it never can be. Nor was it ever at any time so ill-fitted for such a task as now, when it was passionately struggling for its own life within the protestant island. The most energetic patriots at Westminster were just as determined to root out popery in Ireland, as Philip II. had been to root out Lutheran or Calvinistic heresy in the United Provinces.

The Irish rebellion added bitter elements to the great contention in England. The parliament dreaded lest an army raised for the subjugation of Ireland should be used by the king for the subjugation of England. The king justified such dread by trying to buy military support from the rebel confederates by promises that would have gone near to turning Ireland into a separate catholic state. Meanwhile we have to think of Ireland as weltering in bottomless confusion. Parliamentarian protestants were in the field and royalist protestants, anglicans and presbyterians; the Scots settlers to-day standing for the parliament, to-morrow fighting along with Ormonde for the king; the confederate catholics, the catholic gentry of the Pale, all inextricably entangled. Thus we shall see going on for nine desperate years the sowing of the horrid harvest, which it fell to Cromwell after his manner to gather in.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIVE MEMBERS—THE CALL TO ARMS.

I.

THE king returned from Scotland in the latter part of November (1641), baffled in his hopes of aid from the Scots, but cheered by the prospect of quarrels among his enemies at Westminster, expecting to fish in the troubled waters in Ireland, and bent on using the new strength that the converts of reaction were bringing him for the destruction of the popular leaders. The city gave him a great feast, the crowd shouted long life to King Charles and Queen Mary, the church bells rang, wine was set flowing in the conduits in Cornhill and Cheapside, and he went to Whitehall in high elation at what he took for counter-revolution. He instantly began a quarrel by withdrawing the guard that had been appointed for the Houses under the command of Essex. Long ago alive to their danger, the popular leaders had framed that famous exposition of the whole dark case against the monarch which is known to history as the Grand Remonstrance. They now with characteristic energy resumed it. The Remonstrance was a bold manifesto to the public,

setting out in manly terms the story of the parliament, its past gains, its future hopes, the standing perils with which it had to wrestle. The most important of its single clauses was the declaration for church conformity. It was a direct challenge not merely to the king, but to the new party of episcopalian royalists. These were not slow to take up the challenge, and the fight was hard. So deep had the division now become within the walls of the Commons, that the Remonstrance was passed only after violent scenes and by a narrow majority of eleven (November 22).

Early in November Cromwell made the first proposal for placing military force in the hands of parliament. All was seen to hang on the power of the sword, for the army plots brought the nearness of the peril home to the breasts of the popular leaders. A month later the proposal, which soon became the occasion of resort to arms though not the cause, took defined shape. By the Militia Bill the control and organization of the trained bands of the counties was taken out of the king's hands, and transferred to lords-lieutenant nominated by parliament. Next the two Houses joined in a declaration that no religion should be tolerated in either England or Ireland except the religion established by law. But as the whirlpool became more angry, bills and declarations mattered less and less. Each side knew that the other now intended force. Tumultuous mobs found their way day after day to hoot the bishops at Westminster. Partisans of the king began to flock to Whitehall, they were ordered to wear their swords, and an armed guard was posted

ostentatiously at the palace gate. Angry frays followed between these swordsmen of the king and the mob armed with clubs and staves, crying out against the bishops and the popish lords. The bishops themselves were violently hustled, and had their gowns torn from their backs as they went into the House of Lords. Infuriated by these outrages, they issued a foolish protestation that all done by the Lords in their absence would be null and void. This incensed both Lords and Commons and added fuel to the general flame, and the unlucky prelates were impeached and sent to prison. The king tried to change the governor of the Tower and to install a reckless swashbuckler of his own. The outcry was so shrill that in a few hours the swashbuckler was withdrawn. Then by mysterious changes of tack he turned first to Pym, next to the heads of the moderate royalists, Hyde, Falkland, and Culpeper. The short history of the overtures to Pym is as obscure as the relations between Mirabeau and Marie Antoinette. Things had in truth gone too far for such an alliance to be either desirable or fruitful. Events immediately showed that with Charles honest co-operation was impossible. No sooner had he established Falkland and Culpeper in his council, than suddenly, without disclosing a word of his design, he took a step which alienated friends, turned back the stream that was running in his favour, handed over the strong fortress of legality to his enemies, and made war inevitable.

Pym had been too quick for Strafford the autumn before, and Charles resolved that this time his own

blow should be struck first. It did not fall upon men caught unawares. For many weeks suspicion had been deepening that some act of violence upon the popular leaders was coming. Suspicion on one side went with suspicion on the other. Rumours were in the air that Pym and his friends were actually revolving in their minds the impeachment of the queen. Whether the king was misled by the perversity of his wife and the folly of the courtiers, or by his own too ample share of these unhappy qualities, he perpetrated the most irretrievable of all his blunders. A day or two before, he had promised the Commons that the security of every one of them from violence should be as much his care as the preservation of his own children. He had also assured his new advisers that no step should be taken without their knowledge. Yet now he suddenly sent the Attorney-General to the House of Lords, there at the table (January 3, 1642) to impeach one of their own number and five members of the other House, including Pym and Hampden, of high treason. Holles, Haselrig, and Strode were the other three. No stroke of state in history was ever more firmly and manfully countered. News came that officers had invaded the chambers of the five members and were sealing up their papers. The House ordered the immediate arrest of the officers. A messenger arrived from the king to seize the five gentlemen. The House sent a deputation boldly to inform the king that they would take care the five members should be ready to answer any legal charge against them.

Next day a still more startling thing was done. After the midday adjournment, the benches were again crowded, and the five members were in their place. Suddenly the news ran like lightning among them, that the king was on his way from Whitehall with some hundreds of armed retainers. The five members were hurried down to the river, and they had hardly gained a boat before the king and a band of rufflers with swords and pistols entered Westminster Hall. Passing through them, and accompanied by his nephew, the Elector Palatine, the king crossed the inviolable threshold, advanced uncovered up the floor of the House of Commons to the step of the chair, and demanded the five accused members. He asked the Speaker whether they were there. The Speaker replied, in words that will never be forgotten, that he had neither eyes nor ears nor tongue in that place but as the House might be pleased to direct. ''Tis no matter,' the king said. 'I think my eyes are as good as another's.' After looking round, he said he saw that all his birds were flown, but he would take his own course to find them. Then he stammered out a few apologetic sentences, and stepping down from the chair marched away in anger and shame through the grim ranks and amid deep murmurs of privilege out at the door. His band of baffled cut-throats followed him through the hall with sullen curses at the loss of their sport. When next he entered Westminster Hall, he was a prisoner doomed to violent death. Cromwell was doubtless present, little foreseeing his own part in a more effectual perform-

ance of a too similar kind in the same place eleven years hence.

Never has so deep and universal a shock thrilled England. The staunchest friends of the king were in despair. The puritans were divided between dismay, rage, consternation, and passionate resolution. One of them, writing in after years of his old home in distant Lancashire, says: 'I remember upon the occasion of King Charles I. demanding the five members of the House of Commons. Such a night of prayers, tears, and groans I was never present at in all my life: the case was extraordinary, and the work was extraordinary.' It was the same in thousands of households all over the land. The five members a few days later returned in triumph to Westminster. The river was alive with boats decked with gay pennons, and the air resounded with joyful shouts and loud volleys from the primitive firearms of the time. Charles was not there to see or hear. Exactly a week after the Attorney-General had brought up the impeachment of the five members, he quitted Whitehall (January 10), and saw it no more until all had come to an end seven years later.

II.

This daring outrage on law, faith, and honour was a provocation to civil war and the beginning of it. After such an exploit the defenders of the parliament would have been guilty of a criminal betrayal, if they had faltered in facing the issue so decisively raised. Pym (January 14) moved that the House should go

into committee on the state of the kingdom, and Cromwell then moved the consideration of means to put the kingdom into a posture of defence. Hampden by and by introduced a motion to desire the king to put the Tower of London and other parts of the kingdom, with the militia, into such hands as the parliament might confide in. In this way they came to the very essence of the dispute of the hour. Was the king to retain the sword? For some weeks debate went on. It was suggested to the king that the militia might be granted for a time. 'By God, not for an hour!' cried Charles. 'You have asked that of me in this which was never asked of a king, and with which I will not trust my wife and children.'

As the call to arms was every day more plainly felt to be inevitable, it is no wonder that many men on the popular side recoiled. The prospect was dreadful, and even good patriots may well have asked themselves in anguish whether moderation, temper, good will, compromise, might not even now avert it. Pym showed here, as always, a consummate mastery of all the better arts of parliamentary leadership. It is not easy to tell exactly at what moment he first felt that peace with the king was hopeless, but at any rate he was well assured that it was so now. As they neared the edge of the cataract, his instincts of action at once braced and steadied him. He was bold, prompt, a man of initiative, resource, and energy without fever; open and cogent in argument, with a true statesman's eye to the demand of the instant, to the nearest antecedent, to the next step; willing to be moderate when

moderation did not sacrifice the root of the matter; vigorous and uncompromising when essentials were in jeopardy. Cromwell too was active both in the House and the country, little of an orator but a doer.

In April the king demanded admission into Hull, valuable for the importation of arms and troops from abroad. The governor shut the gates and drew up the bridge. The king proclaimed him a traitor. This proceeding has always been accounted the actual beginning of the great civil war. On August 22, 1642, one of the memorable dates in our history, on the evening of a stormy day Charles raised the royal standard in the courtyard at the top of the castle hill at Nottingham. This was the solemn symbol that the king called upon his vassals for their duty and service. Drums and trumpets sounded, and the courtiers and a scanty crowd of onlookers threw up their caps, and cried, 'God save King Charles and hang up the Roundheads!' But a general sadness, says Clarendon, covered the whole town. Melancholy men observed many ill presages, and the king himself appeared more melancholy than his wont. The standard itself was blown down by an unruly wind within a week after it had been set up. This was not the first time that omens had been against the king. At his coronation he wore white instead of purple, and 'some looked on it as an ill presage that the king, laying aside his purple, the robe of majesty, should clothe himself in white, the robe of innocence, as if thereby it were foresignified that he should divest himself of that royal majesty which would keep him safe from affront and

scorn, to rely wholly on the innocence of a virtuous life, which did expose him finally to calamitous ruin.' Still worse was the court preacher's text on the same august occasion, chosen from the Book of Revelation: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,'—'more like his funeral sermon when he was alive, as if he were to have none when he was to be buried.'

A day or two after raising the standard, Charles appointed to be general of the horse Prince Rupert, the third son of his sister the Queen of Bohemia, now in his twenty-third year. The boldness, energy, and military capacity of the young adventurer were destined to prove one of the most formidable of all the elements in the struggle of the next three years. Luckily the intrepid soldier had none of Cromwell's sagacity, caution, and patience, or else that 'providence which men call the chance of war' might have turned out differently.

The Earl of Essex, son of Queen Elizabeth's favourite, was named general of the parliamentary forces, less for any military reputation than from his social influence. 'He was the man,' said the preacher of his funeral sermon (1646), 'to break the ice and set his first footing in the Red Sea. No proclamation of treason could cry him down, nor threatening standard daunt him that in that misty morning, when men knew not each other, whether friend or foe, by his arising dispelled the fog, and by his very name commanded thousands into your service.' Opinion in

most of the country was pretty firm on one side or the other, but it was slow in mounting to the heat of war. The affair was grave, and men went about it with argument and conscience. In every manor-house and rectory and college, across the counters of shops in the towns, on the ale-bench in the villages and on the roads, men plied one another with precedents and analogies, with Bible texts, with endless points of justice and of expediency, thus illustrating in this high historic instance all the strength and all the weakness of human reasoning, all the grandeur and all the levity of civil and ecclesiastical passion. Many, no doubt, shared the mind of Hutchinson's father, who was staunch to the parliamentary cause but infinitely desirous that the quarrel should come to a compromise, and not to the catastrophe of war. Savile said: 'I love religion so well, I would not have it put to the hazard of a battle. I love liberty so much, I would not trust it in the hands of a conqueror; for, much as I love the king, I should not be glad that he should beat the parliament, even though they were in the wrong. My desires are to have no conquests of either side.' Savile was no edifying character; but the politician who would fain say both yes and no stands in every crisis for a numerous host. On the other hand, human nature being constant in its fundamental colours, we may be sure that in both camps were many who proclaimed that the dispute must be fought out, and the sooner the fight began, the sooner would it end.

Enthusiasts for the rights and religion of their

country could not believe, says one of them, that a work so good and necessary would be attended with so much difficulty, and they went into it in the faith that the true cause must quickly win. On the other side, deep-rooted interests and ancient sentiment gathered round the crown as their natural centre. Selfish men who depended upon the crown for honours or substance, and unselfish men who were by habit and connection unalterably attached to an idealised church, united according to their diverse kinds in twofold zeal for the king and the bishops, in the profound assurance that Providence would speedily lay their persecutors low. Families were divided, close kinsmen became violent foes, and brother even slew brother. Some counties were almost wholly for the king, while others went almost wholly for the parliament. In either case, the remnant of a minority, whether the godly or the ungodly, found it best to seek shelter outside. There were counties where the two sides paired and tried to play neutral. The line of social cleavage between the combatants was not definite, but what we are told of Notts was probably true of other districts, that most of the nobles and upper gentry were stout for the king, while most of the middle sort, the able substantial freeholders, and commoners not dependent on the malignants above them, stood for the parliament.

Speaking broadly, the feeling for parliament was strongest in London and the east; the king was strongest in the west and north. Wherever the Celtic element prevailed, as in Wales and Cornwall, the

king had most friends, and the same is true with qualifications in the two other kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland. Where the population was thickest, busiest in trade and manufacture, and wealthiest, they leaned with various degrees of ardour toward the parliament. Yorkshire was divided, the cloth towns south of the Aire being parliamentary. Lancashire, too, was divided, the east for the parliament, the west for the king. The historians draw a line from Flamborough Head to Plymouth, and with some undulations and indentations such a line separates royalist from parliamentary England. In East Anglia opinion was steadfast through the struggle, but elsewhere it fluctuated with the fortunes of the war, and the wavering inclinations of influential gentry. One of the most important circumstances of the times was that the fleet (in July 1642) declared for the parliament.

The temper of the time was hard, men were ready to settle truth by blows, and life, as in the Middle Ages, was still held cheap. The cavalier was hot, unruly, scornful, with all the feudal readiness for bloodshed. The roundhead was keen, stubborn, dogged, sustained by the thought of the heroes of the Old Testament who avenged upon Canaanite and Amalekite the cause of Jehovah. Men lived and fought in the spirit of the Old Testament and not of the New. To men of the mild and reflecting temper of Chillingworth the choice was no more cheerful than between publicans and sinners on one side, and scribes and Pharisees on the other. A fine instance of the

high and manly temper in which the best men entered upon the struggle is to be found in the words used by Sir William Waller to the brave Hopton. 'God, who is the searcher of my heart,' Waller wrote, 'knows with what a sad sense I go upon this service, and with what a perfect hatred I detest this war without an enemy; but I look upon it as sent from God, and that is enough to silence all passion in me. . . . We are both upon the stage, and must act such parts as are assigned us in this tragedy. Let us do it in a way of honour and without personal animosities.'

On the whole, the contest in England was stained by few of the barbarities that usually mark a civil war, especially war with a religious colour upon it. But cruelty, brutality, and squalor are the essence of all war, and here too there was much rough work and some atrocity. Prisoners were sometimes badly used, and the parliamentary generals sent great batches of them like gangs of slaves to toil under the burning sun in the West Indies, or to compulsory service in Venice or an American colony. Men were killed in cold blood after quarter promised, and the shooting of Lucas and Lisle after the surrender of Colchester in 1648, though it is true that the royalist officers had surrendered to mercy, that is without promise of their lives, was still a piece of savagery for which Fairfax and Ireton must divide the blame between them. The ruffianism of war could not be avoided, but it was ruffianism without the diabolic ferocity of Spaniards in the sixteenth century, or Germans in the seventeenth, or French sansculottes in

the eighteenth. The discipline of the royal forces was bad, for their organization was loose; and even if it had been better, we have little difficulty in painting for ourselves the scenes that must have attended these roving bands of soldiery, ill-paid, ill-fed, and emancipated from all those restraints of opinion and the constable, which have so much more to do with our self-control than we love to admit. Nor are we to suppose that all the ugly stories were on one side.

BOOK II.

(1642–45)

CHAPTER I.

CROMWELL IN THE FIELD.

I.

It is not within my scope to follow in detail the military operations of the civil war. For many months they were little more than a series of confused marches, random skirmishes, and casual leaguers of indecisive places. Of generalship, of strategic system, of ingenuity in scientific tactics, in the early stages there was little or none. Soldiers appeared on both sides who had served abroad, and as the armed struggle developed, the great changes in tactics made by Gustavus Adolphus quickly found their way into the operations of the English war. He suppressed all caracoling and parade manœuvres. Cavalry that had formed itself in as many as five or even eight ranks deep, was henceforth never marshalled deeper than three ranks, while in the intervening spaces were platoons of foot and light field-pieces. All this, the soldiers tell us, gave prodigious mobility, and made the Swedish period the most remarkable in the Thirty Years' War. But for some time training on the continent of Europe seems to have been of little use in the conflicts of two great bands of

military mainly rustic among the hills and downs, the lanes and hedges, the rivers and strong places of England. Modern soldiers have noticed as one of the most curious features of the civil war how ignorant each side usually was of the doings, position, and designs of its opponents. Essex stumbled upon the king, Hopton stumbled upon Waller, the king stumbled upon Sir Thomas Fairfax. The two sides drew up in front of one another, foot in the centre, horse on the wings; and then they fell to and hammered one another as hard as they could, and they who hammered hardest and stood to it longest won the day. This was the story of the early engagements.

Armour was fallen into disuse, partly owing to the introduction of firearms, partly perhaps for the reason that pleased King James I.,—because besides protecting the wearer, it also hindered him from hurting other people. The archer had only just disappeared, and arrows were shot by the English so late as at the Isle of Ré in 1627. Indeed at the outbreak of the war Essex issued a precept for raising a company of archers, and in Montrose's campaign in Scotland bowmen are often mentioned. It is curious to modern ears to learn that some of the strongest laws enjoining practice with bow and arrow should have been passed after the invention of gunpowder, and for long there were many who persisted in liking the bow better than the musket, for the whiz of the arrow over their heads kept the horses in terror, and a few horses wounded by arrows sticking in them were made unruly enough to disorder a whole squadron. A

flight of arrows, again, apart from those whom they killed or wounded, demoralised the rest as they watched them hurtling through the air. Extreme conservatives made a judicious mixture between the old time and the new by firing arrows out of muskets. The gunpowder of those days was so weak, that one homely piece of advice to the pistoleer was that he should not discharge his weapon until he could press the barrel close upon the body of his enemy, under the cuirass if possible; then he would be sure not to waste his charge. The old-fashioned musket-rest disappeared during the course of the war. The shotmen, the musketeers and harquebusiers, seem from 1644 to have been to pikemen in the proportion of two to one. It was to the pike and the sword that the hardest work fell. The steel head of the pike was well-fastened upon a strong, straight, yet nimble stock of ash, the whole not less than seventeen or eighteen feet long. It was not until the end of the century that, alike in England and France, the pike was laid aside and the bayonet used in its place. The snaphance or flintlock was little used, at least in the early stages of the war, and the provision of the slow match was one of the difficulties of the armament. Clarendon mentions that in one of the leaguers the besieged were driven to use all the cord of all the beds of the town, steep it in saltpetre, and serve it to the soldiers for match. Cartridges though not unknown were not used in the civil war, and the musketeer went into action with his match slowly burning and a couple of bullets in his mouth. Artillery, partly from the weakness of

the powder, partly from the primitive construction of the mortars and cannon, was a comparatively ineffective arm upon the field, though it was causing a gradual change in fortifications from walls to earthworks. At Naseby the king had only two demi-cannon, as many demi-culverins, and eight sakers. The first weighed something over four thousand pounds, and shot twenty-four pounds. The demi-culverin was a twelve- or nine-pounder. The saker was a brass gun weighing fifteen hundred pounds, with a shot of six or seven pounds.

It was not, however, upon guns any more than upon muskets that the English commander of that age relied in battle for bearing the brunt, whether of attack or of defence. He depended upon his horsemen, either cuirassiers or the newly introduced species, the dragoons, whom it puzzled the military writer of that century whether to describe as horse-footmen or foot-horsemen. Gustavus Adolphus had discovered or created the value of cavalry, and in the English civil war the campaigns were few in which the shock of horse was not the deciding element. Cromwell with his quick sagacity perceived this in anticipation of the lessons of experience. He got a Dutch officer to teach him drill, and his first military proceeding was to raise a troop of horse in his own countryside and diligently fit them for action. As if to illustrate the eternal lesson that there is nothing new under the sun, some have drawn a parallel between the cavalry of the small republics of Greece in the fourth century before Christ and the same arm at Edgehill ; and they

find the same distinction between the Attic cavalry and the days of Alexander, as may be traced between the primitive tactics of Oliver or Rupert and those of Frederick the Great or Napoleon.

We are then to imagine Oliver teaching his men straight turns to left and right, closing and opening their files, going through all the four-and-twenty postures for charging, ramming, and firing their pistols, petronels, and dragons, and learning the various sounds and commands of the trumpet. 'Infinite great,' says an enthusiastic horseman of that time, 'are the considerations which dependeth on a man to teach and govern a troop of horse. To bring ignorant men and more ignorant horse, wild man and mad horse, to those rules of obedience which may crown every motion and action with comely, orderly, and profitable proceedings—*hic labor, hoc opus est.*'

Cromwell's troop was gradually to grow into a regiment of a thousand men, and in every other direction he was conspicuous for briskness and activity. He advanced considerable sums from his modest private means for the public service. He sent down arms into Cambridgeshire for its defence. He boldly seized the magazine in Cambridge Castle and with armed hand stayed the university from sending twenty thousand pounds' worth of its gold and silver plate for the royal use. He was present at the head of his troop in the first serious trial of strength between the parliamentary forces under the Earl of Essex and the forces of the king. The battle of Edgehill (October 23, 1642) is one of the most confused transactions in the

history of the war, and its result was indecisive.[1] The royalists were fourteen thousand against ten thousand for the parliament, and, confiding even less in superior numbers than in their birth and quality, they had little doubt of making short work of the rebellious and canting clowns at the foot of the hill. There was no great display of tactics on either side. Neither side appeared to know when it was gaining and when it was losing. Foes were mistaken for friends, and friends were killed for foes. In some parts of the field the parliament men ran away, while in other parts the king's men were more zealous for plundering than for fight. When night fell, the conflict by tacit agreement came to an end, the royalists suspecting that they had lost the day, and Essex not sure that he had won it. What is certain is that Essex's regiment of horse was unbroken. 'These persons underwritten,' says one eye-witness, 'never stirred from their troops, but they and their troops fought till the last minute,' and among the names of the valiant and tenacious persons so underwritten is that of Cromwell.

Whether before or after Edgehill, it was about this time that Cromwell had that famous conversation with Hampden which stands to this day among the noble and classic commonplaces of English-speaking democracy all over the globe. 'I was a person,' he told his second parliament the year before he died, 'that from my first employment was suddenly pre-

[1] It is hardly possible to take more pains than Mr. Sanford took (*Studies and Illustrations*, pp. 521-528) to extract a correct and coherent story out of irreconcilable authorities.

ferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater, from my first being a captain of a troop of horse, and I did labour as well as I could to discharge my trust, and God blessed me as it pleased him. And I did truly and plainly, and then in a way of foolish simplicity as it was judged by very great and wise men and good men too, desire to make my instruments help me in that work. . . . I had a very worthy friend then, and he was a very noble person, and I know his memory is very grateful to all—Mr. John Hampden. At my first going out into this engagement, I saw our men were beaten at every hand, and desired him that he would make some additions to my Lord Essex's army, of some new regiments. And I told him I would be serviceable to him in bringing such men in as I thought had a spirit that would do something in the work. . . . "Your troops," said I, "are most of them old decayed serving men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows: and," said I, "their troops are gentlemen's sons and persons of quality. Do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen, that have honour and courage and resolution in them? . . . You must get men of a spirit, and . . . of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or else, I am sure, you will be beaten still." . . . He was a wise and worthy person, and he did think that I talked a good notion, but an impracticable one. Truly I told him I could do somewhat in it. I did so, and truly I must needs say that to you, impute it to what you please: I raised such men as had the fear of God before them, and made

some conscience of what they did, and from that day forward, I must say to you, they were never beaten, and wherever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually. And truly this is matter of praise to God, and it hath some instruction in it, to own men who are religious and godly. And so many of them as are peaceably and honestly and quietly disposed to live within government, as will be subject to those gospel rules of obeying magistrates and living under authority—I reckon no godliness without that circle!'

As the months went on, events enlarged Cromwell's vision, and the sharp demands of practical necessity drew him to adopt a new general theory. In his talk with Hampden he does not actually say that if men are quietly disposed to live within the rules of government, that should suffice. But he gradually came to this. The Earl of Manchester had raised to be his major-general Lawrence Crawford, afterward to be one of Cromwell's bitter gainsayers. Crawford had cashiered or suspended his lieutenant-colonel for the sore offence of holding wrong opinions in religion. Cromwell's rebuke (March 1643) is of the sharpest. 'Surely you are not well advised thus to turn off one so faithful in the cause, and so able to serve you as this man is. Give me leave to tell you, I cannot be of your judgment; cannot understand it, if a man notorious for wickedness, for oaths, for drinking, hath as great a share in your affection as one who fears an oath, who fears to sin. Aye, but the man is an Anabaptist. Are you sure of that? Admit that he

be, shall that render him incapable to serve the public? *Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies.* I advised you formerly to bear with men of different minds from yourself; if you had done it when I advised you to do it, I think you would not have had so many stumbling-blocks in your way. *Take heed of being sharp, or too easily sharpened by others, against those to whom you can object little but that they square not with you in every opinion concerning matters of religion.*'

In laying down to the pragmatical Crawford what has become a fundamental of free governments, Cromwell probably did not foresee the schism that his maxims would presently create in the Revolutionary ranks. To save the cause was the cry of all of them, but the cause was not to all of them the same. Whatever inscription was to be emblazoned on the parliamentary banners, success in the field was the one essential. Pym and Hampden had perceived it from the first appeal to arms and for long before, and they had bent all their energies to urging it upon the House and inspiring their commanders with their own conviction. Cromwell needed no pressure. He not only saw that without military success the cause was lost, but that the key to military success must be a force at once earnest and well disciplined; and he applied all the keen and energetic practical qualities of his genius to the creation of such a force within his own area. He was day and night preparing the force that was

to show its quality on the day of Marston Moor. 'I beseech you be careful what captains of horse you choose; a few honest men are better than numbers. If you choose godly, honest men to be captains of horse, honest men will follow them. It may be that it provokes some spirits to see such plain men made captains of horse. It had been well if men of honour and birth had entered into these employments; but why do they not appear? Who would have hindered them? But seeing it was necessary the work should go on, better plain men than none; but best to have men patient of wants, faithful and conscientious in their employments.' Then, in famous words that are full of life, because they point with emphasis and colour to a social truth that always needs refreshing: 'I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else. I honour a gentleman that is so indeed.' When Manchester's troops joined him, Cromwell found them very bad, mutinous, and untrustworthy, though they were paid almost to the week, while his own men were left to depend on what the sequestrations of the property of malignants in Huntingdonshire brought in. Yet, paid or unpaid, his troops increased. 'A lovely company,' he calls them; 'they are no Anabaptists, they are honest, sober Christians, they expect to be used like men.'

He had good right to say that he had minded the public service even to forgetfulness of his own and his men's necessities. His estate was small, yet

already he had given in money between eleven and twelve hundred pounds. With unwearied zeal he organized his county, and kept delinquent churchmen in order. 'Lest the soldiers should in any tumultuous way attempt the reformation of the cathedral [Ely], I require you,' writes Cromwell to a certain Mr. Hitch, 'to forbear altogether your choir service, so unedifying and offensive.' Mr. Hitch, to his honour, stuck to his service. Thereupon Cromwell stamps up the aisle with his hat on, calling in hoarse barrack tones to Mr. Hitch, 'Leave off your fooling, and come down, sir.' Laud would have said just the same to a puritan prayer-meeting. Many more things are unedifying and offensive than Cromwell had thought of, whether in puritan or Anglican.

II.

The time came when the weapon so carefully forged and tempered was to be tried. The royalist stronghold on the Lincolnshire border was Newark, and it stood out through the whole course of the war. It is in one of the incessant skirmishes in the neighbourhood of Newark or on the Newark roads, that we have our first vision of Cromwell and his cavalry in actual engagement. The scene was a couple of miles from Grantham (May 13, 1643).

Ten weeks later (July 28), a more important encounter happened at Gainsborough, and Cromwell has described it with a terseness and force that is in

strange contrast to the turgid and uncouth confusion of his speeches. Within a mile and a half of the town they met a body of a hundred of the enemy's horse. Cromwell's dragoons laboured to beat them back, but before they could dismount, the enemy charged and repulsed them. 'Then our horse charged and broke them. The enemy being at the top of a very steep hill over our heads, some of our men attempted to march up that hill; the enemy opposed; our men drove them up and forced their passage.' By the time they came up they saw the enemy well set in two bodies, the horse facing Cromwell in front, less than a musket-shot away, and a reserve of a full regiment of horse behind. 'We endeavoured to put our men into as good order as we could. The enemy in the meanwhile advanced toward us, to take us at disadvantage; but in such order as we were, we charged their great body, I having the right wing. We came up horse to horse, where we disputed it with our swords and pistols a pretty time, all keeping close order, so that one could not break the other. At last, they a little shrinking, our men perceiving it pressed in upon them, and immediately routed their whole body.' The reserve meanwhile stood unbroken. Cromwell rapidly formed up three of his own troops whom he kept back from the chase, along with four troops of the Lincoln men. Cavendish, the royalist general, charged and routed the Lincolners. 'Immediately I fell on his rear with my three troops, which did so astonish him that he gave over the chase and would fain have delivered himself from me.

But I pressing on forced them down a hill, having good execution of them; and below the hill, drove the general with some of his soldiers into a quagmire, where my captain slew him with a thrust under his short ribs.'

Whether this thrust under the short ribs was well done or not by chivalrous rules, has been a topic of controversy. But the battle was not over. After an interval the parliamentarians unexpectedly found themselves within a quarter of a mile of a body of horse and foot, which was in fact Lord Newcastle's army. Retreat was inevitable. Lord Willoughby ordered Cromwell to bring off both horse and foot. 'I went to bring them off; but before I returned, divers foot were engaged, the enemy advancing with his whole body. Our foot retreated in some disorder. Our horse also came off with some trouble, being wearied with the long fight and their horses tired.' 'But such was the goodness of God,' says another narrator in completion, 'giving courage and valour to our men and officers, that while Major Whalley and Captain Ayscough, sometimes the one with four troops faced the enemy, sometimes the other, to the exceeding glory of God be it spoken, and the great honour of those two gentlemen, they with this handful forced the enemy so, and dared them to their teeth in at the least eight or nine several removes, the enemy following at their heels; and they, though their horses were exceedingly tired, retreating in order near carbine-shot of the enemy, who then followed them, firing upon them; Colonel Cromwell

gathering up the main body, and facing them behind those two lesser bodies—that in despite of the enemy we brought off our horse in this order without the loss of two men.' The military critic of our own day marks great improvement between Grantham and Gainsborough; he notes how in the second of the two days there is no delay in forming up; how the deployment is rapidly carried out over difficult ground, bespeaking well-drilled and flexible troops; how the charge is prompt and decisive, with a reserve kept well in hand, and then launched triumphantly at the right moment; how skilfully the infantry in an unequal fight is protected in the eight or nine moves of its retreat.

At Winceby or Horncastle fight, things were still better (October 11, 1643). So soon as the men had knowledge of the enemy's coming, they were very full of joy and resolution, thinking it a great mercy that they should now fight with him, and on they went singing their psalms, Cromwell in the van. The royalist dragoons gave him a first volley, as he fell with brave resolution upon them, and then at half pistol-shot a second, and his horse was killed under him. But he took a soldier's horse and promptly mounting again rejoined the charge, which 'was so home-given, and performed with so much admirable courage and resolution, that the enemy stood not another, but were driven back on their own body.'

It was clear that a new cavalry leader had arisen in England, as daring as the dreaded Rupert, but with a coolness in the red blaze of battle, a piercing

eye for the shifts and changes in the fortunes of the day, above all with a power of wielding his phalanx with a combined steadiness and mobility such as the fiery prince never had. Whether Rupert or Oliver was first to change cavalry tactics is, among experts, matter of dispute. The older way had been to fire a volley before the charge. The front rank discharged its pistols, then opened right and left, and the second rank took its place, and so down to the fifth. Then came the onset with swords and butt-ends of their firearms. The new plan was to substitute the tactics of the shock; for the horse to keep close together, knee to knee, to face the enemy front to front, and either to receive the hostile charge in steady strong cohesion, or else in the same cohesion to bear down on the foe sword in hand, and not to fire either pistol or carbine until they had broken through.

After the war had lasted a year and a half, things looked critical for the parliament. Lincoln stood firm, and the eastern counties stood firm, but the king had the best of it both in popular favour and military position in the north including York, and the west including Exeter, and the midlands including Bedford and Northampton. There seemed also to be a chance of forces being released in Ireland, and of relief coming to the king from France. The genius of Pym, who had discerned the vital importance of the Scots to the English struggle at its beginning, now turned to the same quarter at the second decisive hour of peril. He contrived an alliance with them, raised money for them, made all ready for their

immediate advance across the border, and so opened what was for more reasons than one a new and critical chapter in the conflict.

There were many varying combinations between English and Scottish parties from 1639 down to Cromwell's crowning victory at Worcester in 1651. In none of them did the alliance rest upon broad and real community of aim, sentiment, or policy, and the result was that Scottish and English allies were always on the verge of open enmity. The two nations were not one in temperament, nor spiritual experience, nor political requirements; and even at the few moments when they approached a kind of cordiality, their relations were uneasy. In Cromwell this uneasiness was from the first very near to active resentment. Whether Pym was conscious how artificial was the combination, or foresaw any of the difficulties that would arise from divergent aims in the parties to it, we cannot tell. The military situation in any case left him no choice, and he was compelled to pay the price, just as Charles II. was when he made his bargain with the Scots seven years later. That price was the Solemn League and Covenant (September 1643). This famous engagement was forced upon the English. They desired a merely civil alliance. The Scots, on the other hand, convinced from their own experience that presbytery was the only sure barrier of defence against the return of the Pope and his legions, insisted that the alliance should be a religious compact, by which English, Scots, and Irish were to bind themselves to bring the churches in the three

kingdoms to uniformity in doctrine, church government, and form of worship, so that the Lord and the name of the Lord should be one throughout the realm. For three years from Pym's bargain the Scots remained on English ground. The Scots fought for protestant uniformity, and the English leaders bowed to the demand with doubtful sincerity and with no enthusiasm. Puritanism and presbyterianism were not the same thing, and even Englishmen who doubted of episcopacy as it stood made no secret of their distaste for presbytery in France, Geneva, the Low Countries, or in Scotland. Many troubles followed, but statesmanship deals with troubles as they arise, and Pym's action was a master-stroke.

CHAPTER II.

MARSTON MOOR.

In 1643 notable actors vanished from the scene. In the closing days of 1642, Richelieu the dictator of Europe had passed away. In a few months he was followed by his master, Louis XIII., brother of the English queen. Louis XIV., then a child five years old, began his famous reign of seventy-two many-coloured years, and Mazarin succeeded to the ascendancy and the policy of which Richelieu had given him the key. So on our own more dimly lighted stage conspicuous characters had gone.

Lord Brooke, author of one of the earliest and strongest attacks upon episcopacy, and standing almost as high as any in the confidence of the party, was shot from the central tower of the cathedral (March 2) by the soldiers besieged in Lichfield Close. On the other side the virtuous Falkland, harshly awakened from fair dreams of truth and peace by the rude clamour and savage blows of exasperated combatants, sought death in the front rank of the royal forces at the first battle of Newbury (September). His name remains when all arguments about him have been rehearsed and are at an end,—one of that rare band

of the sons of time, soldiers in lost causes, who find this world too vexed and rough a scene for them, but to whom history will never grudge her tenderest memories.

Two figures more important than either of these had also disappeared. Hampden had been mortally wounded in a skirmish at Chalgrove Field. Then in December the long strain of heavy anxieties burdening so many years had brought to an end the priceless life of Pym, the greatest leader of them all. With these two the giants of the first generation fell. The crisis had undergone once more a change of phase. The clouds hung heavier, the storm was darker, the ship laboured in the trough. A little group of men next stood in the front line, honourable in character and patriotic in intention, but mediocre in their capacity for war, and guided rather by amiable hopes than by a strong-handed grasp of shifting and dangerous positions. For them too the hour had struck. Essex, Manchester, Warwick, were slow in motion without being firm in conclusion; just and candid, but with no faculty of clenching; unwilling to see that Thorough must be met by Thorough; and of that Fabian type whom the quick call for action instead of inspiring irritates. Benevolent history may mourn that men so good were no longer able to serve their time. Their misfortune was that misgivings about future solutions dulled their sense of instant needs. Cromwell had truer impressions and better nerve. The one essential was that Charles should not come out master in the military struggle. Cromwell saw that at this stage

nothing else mattered; he saw that the parliamentary liberties of the country could have no safety, until the king's weapon had been finally struck from his hand. At least one other actor in that scene was as keenly alive to this as Cromwell, and that was Charles himself.

It is a mistake to suppose that the patriots and their comrades had now at their back a nation at red heat. The flame kindled by the attempted arrest of the five members, and by the tyranny of the Star Chamber or of the bishops, had a little sunk. Divisions had arisen, and that fatal and familiar stage had come when men on the same side hate one another more bitterly than they hate the common foe. New circumstances evolved new motives. Some who had been most forward against the king at first had early fainted by the way, and were now thinking of pardon and royal favour. Others were men of a neutral spirit, willing to have a peace on any terms. Others had got estates by serving the parliament, and now wished to secure them by serving the king; while those who had got no estates bore a grudge against the party that had overlooked them.

Cromwell in his place warned the House of the discouragement that was stealing upon the public mind. Unless, he said, we have a more vigorous prosecution of the war, we shall make the kingdom weary of us and hate the name of a parliament. Even many that had at the beginning been their friends, were now saying that Lords and Commoners had got great places and commands and the power of the sword into

their hands, and would prolong the war in order to perpetuate their own grandeur, just as soldiers of fortune across the seas spun out campaigns in order to keep their own employments. If the army were not put upon another footing and the war more vigorously followed, the people could bear the war no longer, but would insist upon peace, even rather a dishonourable peace than none.

Almost the same reproaches were brought on the other side. This is the moment when Clarendon says that it seemed as if the whole stock of affection, loyalty, and courage that had at first animated the friends of the king were now quite spent, and had been followed up by negligence, laziness, inadvertency, and base dejection of spirit. Mere folly produced as much mischief to the king's cause as deliberate villainy could have done. Charles's own counsels according to Clarendon were as irresolute and unsteady as his advisers were ill-humoured and factious. They were all blind to what ought to have been evident, and full of trepidation about things that were never likely to happen. One day they wasted time in deliberating without coming to a decision, another day they decided without deliberating. Worst of all, decision was never followed by vigorous execution.

At the end of 1642 the king had accounted his business in Yorkshire as good as done. Here the great man was the Earl of Newcastle. He was an accomplished man, the patron of good poets like Dryden, and bad poets like Shadwell. He wrote comedies of his own, which according to his wife were

inspired by the pleasant and laudable object of laughing at the follies of mankind; and there is a story, probably apocryphal, of his entertaining at dinner in Paris no less immortal persons than Hobbes and Descartes. A sage Italian, dead a hundred years before, warned statesmen that there is no worse thing in all the world than levity. 'Light men are the very instruments for whatever is bad, dangerous, and hurtful; flee from them like fire.' Of this evil tribe of Guicciardini's, was Lord Newcastle; and too many of Charles's friends, and in a certain sense even Charles himself, were no better. All this, however, did not prevent Newcastle by his vast territorial influence, popularity, and spirit, from raising in the great county of York, in Northumberland, Durham, and Westmorland, a force of nearly seven thousand men. He had seized the metropolitan city of northern England, and he had occupied the city on the Tyne from which he took his title. It was the only great port all the way from Plymouth to Berwick by which the king could bring arms and ammunition from the continent into England. Lord Newcastle was confronted in Yorkshire by the two Fairfaxes, with many, though hardly a majority, of the gentry of the county on their side, and it was in these operations that the younger Fairfax, the future Lord General of the parliament, first showed his gallantry, his dash, his invincible persistency, and his skill. The royalist commander won a stiff fight at Tadcaster before the end of the year; and after alternations of capture and recapture at Bradford, Wakefield, and Leeds, by the middle of the

summer of 1643 he made himself master of all the towns in the interior of the county. The Fairfaxes were badly beaten (June 30) at Adwalton, a ridge above Bradford, and were driven by their thinned numbers, by some disaffection among the officers, and by occasional lack of bullet, match, and powder, to force their way over the waste and hilly moors and to throw themselves into Hull, the only important place in the county of York now left in the hands of the parliament.

All through the summer of 1643 the tide of victory flowed strong for the king. Newcastle's successes in Yorkshire accompanied the successes of Hopton in the west. Lord Stamford, with his army of seven thousand men, had been beaten out of the field at Stratton (May 1643), leaving the king master over all the south-west, with the important exception of Plymouth. The defeat at the engagement of Roundway Down (July 13) had broken up Waller's army. Bristol had fallen (July 26). The movements of Essex against Oxford, like most of that unlucky general's operations, had ended in failure, and he protested to the parliament that he could not carry on without reinforcements in men and money. It seemed as if nothing could prevent the triumph of a great combined operation by which the king should lead his main army down the valley of the Thames, while Newcastle should bring his northern force through the eastern counties and unite with the king in overpowering London. But the moment was lost, and the tide turned. For good reasons or bad, the king stopped

to lay siege to Gloucester, and so gave time to Essex to recover. This was one of the critical events of the war, as it was Essex's one marked success. Charles was compelled to raise the siege, and his further advance was checked by his repulse at Newbury (September 20). The other branch of the combined movement by which Newcastle was to march south was hardly so much as seriously attempted.

Newcastle's doings in Yorkshire and their sequel prepared the way for that important encounter a year later, which brought Cromwell into the front rank of military captains. For most of that year, from the summer of 1643 to the summer of 1644, the power of the northern army and the fate of London and the parliamentary cause turned upon Lincolnshire, the borderland between Yorkshire and the stubborn counties to the south-east. This issue was settled by the cavalry action at Winceby (*ante*, p. 137), where the united forces of Fairfax and Manchester met a body of royalist contingents from Newcastle, Gainsborough, and Lincoln. The same day that saw the royalist repulse at Winceby, saw Newcastle raise the siege of Hull. Two months later the Scots began their march southward, and in January (1644) they crossed the border. Cromwell during the spring was occupied in taking fortified houses, and in other miscellaneous military duties. He was soon called to a decisive occasion. Newcastle, who for three months had contested the advance of the Scots, was in April obliged to fall back on York, where he was gradually closed in by Fairfax, Manchester, and the Scots.

From April to June he held out, until the welcome news reached him that Rupert was advancing to his relief. Fearing to be caught between two fires, the parliamentary generals drew off. By a series of skilful movements, Rupert joined Newcastle within the walls of York, and forced him to assent to immediate engagement with the retreating parliamentarians.

It has been said that the two armies who stood face to face at Marston (July 2, 1644), were the largest masses of men that had met as foes on English ground since the wars of the Roses. The royalist force counted seventeen or eighteen thousand men, the parliamentarians and their Scottish allies twenty-six or twenty-seven thousand. The whole were about twice as many as were engaged at Edgehill. In our generation people may make light of battles where armies of only a few thousand men were engaged. Yet we may as well remember that Napoleon entered Italy in 1796 with only thirty thousand men under arms. At Arcola and at Rivoli he had not over fifteen thousand in the field, and even at Marengo he had not twice as many. In the great campaign of 1631-32 in the Thirty Years' War, the Imperialists were twenty-four thousand foot and thirteen thousand horse, while the Swedes were twenty-eight thousand foot and nine thousand horse. As the forces engaged at Marston were the most numerous, so the battle was the bloodiest in the civil war. It was also the most singular, for the runaways were as many on one side as the other, and the three victorious generals were all of them fugitives from the field. The general course

of what happened is fairly intelligible, though in details all is open to a raking fire of historic doubts.[1]

The two armies faced one another as usual in two parallel lines, the foot in the centre and the horse on the wings. A wide ditch with a hedge on its southern side divided them. The parliamentary forces were drawn up on a ridge sloping to the moor, the Scottish foot under Leven and Baillie stationed in the centre, with the Yorkshire army under the two Fairfaxes on the right, and Manchester's army of the Eastern Association on the left. The younger Fairfax, on the right wing, was in command of a body of horse counted by some at four thousand, of whom nearly one-third were Scots. On the left wing Cromwell had between two thousand and twenty-five hundred of the regular cavalry of the Eastern Association, supported by a reserve of about eight hundred ill-horsed Scots in the rear. Of this force of cavalry, on which as it happened the fortune of the day was to depend, David Leslie commanded the Scottish contingent under Cromwell. The whole line extended about a mile and a half from right to left, and the royalist line was rather longer. On the king's side, Rupert faced Oliver. Newcastle and his main adviser Eythin faced Leven and Baillie, and Goring faced the two Fairfaxes. The hostile lines were so near to one another that, as Cromwell's scout-master says, 'their foot was close to our noses.'

[1] Mr. Firth has closely described the evidence and authorities in the *Transactions of Royal Historical Society*, vol. xii. See Colonel Hönig's *Oliver Cromwell*, II. Theil, p. 136, and a more important excursus, Bd. ii. pp. 441-453.

So for some five hours (July 2) the two hosts, with colours flying and match burning, looked each other in the face. It was a showery summer afternoon. The parliamentarians in the standing corn, hungry and wet, beguiled the time in singing hymns. 'You cannot imagine,' says an eye-witness, 'the courage, spirit, and resolution that was taken up on both sides; for we looked, and no doubt they also, upon this fight as the losing or gaining the garland. And now, sir, consider the height of difference of spirits: in their army the cream of all the papists in England, and in ours a collection out of all the corners of England and Scotland, of such as had the greatest antipathy to popery and tyranny; these equally thinking the extirpation of each other. And now the sword must determine that which a hundred years' policy and dispute could not do.' Five o'clock came, and a strange stillness fell upon them all. Rupert said to Newcastle that there would be no fight that day, and Newcastle rode to his great coach standing not far off, called for a pipe of tobacco, and composed himself for the evening. He was soon disturbed. At seven o'clock the flame of battle leaped forth, the low hum of the two armed hosts in an instant changed into fierce uproar, and before many minutes the moor and the slope of the hill were covered with bloodshed and disorder. Who gave the sign for the general engagement we do not know, and it is even likely that no sign as the result of deliberate and concerted plan was ever given at all.

Horse and foot moved down the hill, 'like so many

thick clouds.' Cromwell, on the parliamentary left, charged Rupert with the greatest resolution that ever was seen. It was the first time that these two great leaders of horse had ever met in direct shock, and it was here that Rupert gave to Oliver the brave nickname of Ironside. As it happened, this was also one of the rare occasions when Oliver's cavalry suffered a check. David Leslie with his Scotch troopers was luckily at hand, and charging forward together they fell upon Rupert's right flank. This diversion enabled Oliver, who had been wounded in the neck, to order his retreating men to face about. Such a manœuvre, say the soldiers, is one of the nicest in the whole range of tactics, and bears witness to the discipline and flexibility of Cromwell's force, like a delicate-mouthed charger with a consummate rider. With Leslie's aid they put Rupert and his cavalry to rout. 'Cromwell's own division,' says the scout-master, 'had a hard pull of it, for they were charged by Rupert's bravest men both in front and flank. They stood at the sword's point a pretty while, hacking one another; but at last he broke through them, scattering them like a little dust.' This done, the foot of their own wing charging by their side, they scattered the royalists as fast as they charged them, slashing them down as they went. The horse carried the whole field on the left before them, thinking that the victory was theirs, and that 'nothing was to be done but to kill and take prisoners.' It was admitted by Cromwell's keenest partisan that Leslie's chase of the broken forces of Rupert, making a rally impossible,

was what left Cromwell free to hold his men compact and ready for another charge. The key to most of his victories was his care that his horse, when they had broken the enemy, should not scatter in pursuit; the secret, a masterful coolness and the flash of military perception in the leader, along with iron discipline in the men.

Unfortunately all had gone wrong elsewhere. On the parliamentary right the operation as conducted by Cromwell on the left had been reversed. Sir Thomas Fairfax charged Goring, as Cromwell and Leslie charged Rupert, and he made a desperate fight for it. He cut his way through, chasing a body of Goring's force before him on the road south to York. When he turned back from his chase, after being unhorsed, severely wounded, and with difficulty rescued from the enemy, he found that Goring by a charge of savage vigour had completely broken the main body of the parliamentary horse on the right, had driven them in upon their own foot, and had even thrown the main body of the Scotch foot into disorder. This dangerous moment has been described by a royalist eye-witness. The runaways on both sides were so many, so breathless, so speechless, so full of fears, that he would hardly have known them for men. Both armies were mixed up together, both horse and foot, no side keeping their own posts. Here he met a shoal of Scots, loud in lamentation as if the day of doom had overtaken them. Elsewhere he saw a ragged troop reduced to four and a cornet, then an officer of foot,

hatless, breathless, and with only so much tongue as to ask the way to the next garrison.

In the centre meanwhile the parliamentary force was completely broken, though the Scotch infantry on the right continued stubbornly to hold their ground. This was the crisis of the fight, and the parliamentary battle seemed to be irretrievably lost. It was saved in a second act, by the manful stoutness of a remnant of the Scots in the centre, and still more by the genius and energy of Cromwell and the endurance of his troopers. Many both of the Scottish and English foot had taken to flight. Their braver comrades whom they left behind held firm against assault after assault from Newcastle and the royalists. Cromwell, having disposed of Rupert on the left, now swept round in the royalist rear to the point on their left where Goring had been stationed before the battle began. 'Here,' says the scout-master, 'the business of the day, nay, of the kingdom, came to be determined.' Goring's men, seeing Cromwell's manœuvre, dropped their pursuit and plunder, marched down the hill, just as Fairfax had marched down it an hour before, and speedily came to the same disaster.

Cromwell keeping his whole force in hand, and concentrating it upon the immediate object of beating Goring, no sooner succeeded than he turned to the next object, and exerted his full strength upon that. This next object was now the relief of the harassed foot in the centre. Attacking in front and flank, he threw his whole force upon the royalist infantry of

Newcastle, still hard at work on what had been the centre of the line, supported by a remnant of Goring's horse. This was the grand movement which military critics think worthy of comparison with that decisive charge of Seidlitz and his five thousand horse, which gained for Frederick the Great the renowned victory at Zorndorf. 'Major-General David Leslie, seeing us thus pluck a victory out of the enemy's hands, could not too much commend us, and professed Europe had no better soldiers!' Before ten o'clock all was over, and the royalists beaten from the field were in full retreat. In what is sometimes too lightly called the vulgar courage of the soldier, neither side was wanting. Cromwell's was the only manœuvre of the day that showed the talent of the soldier's eye or the power of swift initiative.

More than four thousand brave men lay gory and stark upon the field under the summer moon. More than three thousand of them a few hours before had gone into the fight shouting, 'For God and the king!' met by the hoarse counter-shout from the parliamentarians, 'God with us!' So confident were each that divine favour was on their side. At the famed battle of Rocroi the year before, which transferred the laurels of military superiority from Spain to France, eight thousand Spaniards were destroyed and two thousand French, out of a total force on both sides of some forty-five thousand.

A story is told of Marston, for which there is as good evidence as for many things that men believe. A Lancashire squire of ancient line was killed fighting

for the king. His wife came upon the field the next morning to search for him. They were stripping and burying the slain. A general officer asked her what she was about, and she told him her melancholy tale. He listened to her with great tenderness, and earnestly besought her to leave the horrid scene. She complied, and calling for a trooper, he set her upon the horse. On her way she inquired the name of the officer, and learned that he was Lieutenant-General Cromwell.

Cromwell's own references to his first great battle are comprised in three or four well-known sentences: 'It had all the evidences of an absolute victory, obtained by the Lord's blessing on the godly party principally. We never charged but we routed the enemy. The left wing, which I commanded, being our own horse, saving a few Scots in our rear, beat all the prince's horse, and God made them stubble to our swords. We charged their regiments of foot with our horse, and routed all we charged. I believe of twenty thousand the prince hath not four thousand left. Give glory, all the glory to God.'

Without dwelling on the question how much the stubborn valour of the Scots under Baillie and Lumsden against the royalist assaults on the centre had to do with the triumphant result, still to describe a force nearly one-third as large as his own and charging side by side with himself, as a few Scots in our rear, must be set down as strangely loose. For if one thing is more clear than another amid the obscurities of Marston, it is that Leslie's flank attack on Rupert while the Ironsides were falling back was the key to

the decisive events that followed. The only plea to be made is that Oliver was not writing an official despatch, but a hurried private letter announcing to a kinsman the calamitous loss of a gallant son upon the battlefield, in which fullness of detail was not to be looked for. When all justice has been done to the valour of the Scots, glory enough was left for Cromwell; and so, when the party dispute was over, the public opinion of the time pronounced.

CHAPTER III.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND THE CONFLICT OF IDEALS.

I.

With the march of these events a march of ideas proceeded, of no less interest for mankind. The same commotion that was fast breaking up the foundation of the throne, had already shaken down the church. To glance at this process is no irrelevant excursion, but takes us to the heart of the contention, and to a central epoch in the growth of the career of Cromwell. The only great protestant council ever assembled on English soil has, for various reasons, lain mostly in the dim background of our history.[1] Yet it is no unimportant chapter in the eternal controversy between spiritual power and temporal, no transitory bubble in the troubled surges of the Reformation. Dead are most of its topics, or else in the ceaseless transmigration of men's ideas as the ages pass, its enigmas are now propounded in many altered shapes. Still, as we eye

[1] Since this chapter was first printed, Dr. William Shaw has published his *History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth*, a work of importance in its elucidation of the controversies of the Westminster Assembly, and otherwise. The 'Minutes' of the Assembly were published in 1874.

these phantoms of old debate, and note the faded, crumbling vesture in which once vivid forms of human thought were clad, we stand closer to the inner mind of the serious men and women of that time than when we ponder political discussions either of soldiers or of parliament. The slow fluctuations of the war from Edgehill to Marston left room for strange expansions in the sphere of religion, quite as important as the fortune of battle itself. In a puritan age citizenship in the secular state fills a smaller space in the imaginations of men, than the mystic fellowship of the *civitas Dei*, the city of God; hence the passionate concern in many a problem that for us is either settled or indifferent. Nor should we forget what is a main element in the natural history of intolerance, that in such times error ranks as sin and even the most monstrous shape of sin.

The aggressions of the Commons upon the old church order had begun, as we saw (p. 98), by a demand for the ejectment of the bishops from the Lords. The Lords resisted so drastic a change in the composition of their own body (1641). The tide rose, passion became more intense, judgment waxed more uncompromising, and at the instigation of Cromwell and Vane resolute proposals were made in the Commons for the abolition of the episcopal office and the transfer to lay commissions, instituted and controlled by parliament, of episcopal functions of jurisdiction and ordination. On what scheme the church should be reconstructed neither Cromwell nor parliament had considered, any more than they considered in later

years what was to follow a fallen monarchy. In the Grand Remonstrance of the winter of 1641, the Commons desired a general synod of the most grave, pious, learned, and judicious divines of this island, to consider all things necessary for the peace and good government of the church. It was not until the summer of 1643 that this synod was at last after half a dozen efforts actually appointed by parliament.

The flames of fanaticism were blazing with a fierceness not congenial to the English temper, and such as has hardly possessed Englishmen before or since. Puritanism showed itself to have a most unlovely side. It was not merely that controversy was rough and coarse, though it was not much less coarse in puritan pulpits than it had been on the lips of German friars or Jesuit polemists in earlier stages. In Burton's famous sermon for which he suffered punishment so barbarous, he calls the bishops Jesuitical polypragmatics, anti-christian mushrooms, factors for anti-Christ, dumb dogs, ravening wolves, robbers of souls, miscreants. Even the august genius of Milton could not resist the virulent contagion of the time. As difficulties multiplied, coarseness grew into ferocity. A preacher before the House of Commons so early as 1641 cried out to them: 'What soldier's heart would not start deliberately to come into a subdued city and take the little ones upon the spear's point, to take them by the heels and beat out their brains against the wall? What inhumanity and barbarousness would this be thought? Yet if this work be to revenge God's church against Babylon, he is a blessed man that takes

and dashes the little ones against the stones.' The fiery rage of the old Red Dragon of Rome itself, or the wild battle-cries of Islam, were hardly less appalling than these dark transports of puritan imagination. Even prayers were often more like imprecation than intercession. When Montrose lay under sentence of death, he declined the offer of the presbyterian ministers to pray with him, for he knew that the address to Heaven would be : 'Lord, vouchsafe yet to touch the obdurate heart of this proud, incorrigible sinner, this wicked, perjured, traitorous, and profane person, who refuses to hearken to the voice of thy kirk.' It was a day of wrath, and the gospel of charity was for the moment sealed.

The ferment was tremendous. Milton, in well-known words, shows us how London of that time (1644), the city of refuge encompassed with God's protection, was not busier as a shop of war with hammers and anvils fashioning out the instruments of armed justice, than it was with pens and heads sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, and revolving new ideas. Another observer of a different spirit tells how hardly a day passed (1646) without the brewing or broaching of some new opinion. People are said to esteem an opinion a mere diurnal —after a day or two scarce worth the keeping. 'If any man have lost his religion, let him repair to London, and I 'll warrant him he shall find it. I had almost said, too, and if any man has a religion, let him come but hither now, and he shall go near to lose it.' Well might the zealots of uniformity tremble.

Louder and more incessant, says Baxter, than disputes about infant baptism or antinomianism, waxed their call for liberty of conscience, that every man might preach and do in matters of religion what he pleased. All these disputes, and the matters of them, found a focus in the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

It was nominally composed of one hundred and fifty members, including not only Anglicans, but Anglican bishops, and comprehending, besides divines, ten lay peers and twice as many members of the other House. Eight Scottish commissioners were included. The Anglicans never came, or else they immediately fell off; the laymen, with the notable exception of Selden, took but a secondary part; and it became essentially a body of divines, usually some sixty of them in attendance. The field appointed for their toil was indeed enormous. It was nothing less than the reorganization of the spiritual power, subject to the shifting exigencies of the temporal, with divers patterns to choose from in the reformed churches out of England. Faith, worship, discipline, government, were all comprehended in their vast operation. They were instructed to organize a scheme for a church; to compose a directory in place of the Prayer Book; to set forth in a confession of faith what men must believe; to draw up a catechism for teaching the true creed. Work that in itself would have sufficed for giants was complicated by the play of politics outside and the necessity of serving many changing masters. The important point is, that their masters were laymen. The assembly was simply to advise. Parlia-

ment had no more intention of letting the divines escape its own direct control, than Henry VIII. or Elizabeth would have had. The assembly was the creature of a parliamentary ordinance. To parliament it must report, and without assent of parliament its proceedings must come to naught. This was not all. The Solemn League and Covenant in the autumn of 1643, and the entry of the Scots upon the scene, gave a new turn to religious forces, and ended in a remarkable transformation of political parties. The Scots had exacted the Covenant from the parliamentary leaders as the price of military aid, and the Covenant meant the reconstruction of the English Church, not upon the lines of modified episcopacy or presbytery regulated by lay supremacy, but upon presbytery after the Scottish model of church government by clerical assemblies.

The divines first met in Henry VII.'s chapel (July 1, 1643), but when the weather grew colder they moved into the Jerusalem Chamber—that old-world room, where anybody apt, 'in the spacious circuit of his musing,' to wander among far-off things, may find so many memorable associations, and none of them more memorable than this. For most of five years and a half they sat—over one thousand sittings. On five days in the week they laboured from nine in the morning until one or two in the afternoon. Each member received four shillings a day, and was fined sixpence if he was late for prayers at half-past eight. Not seldom they had a day of fasting, when they spent from nine to five very graciously. 'After Dr.

Twisse had begun with a brief prayer, Mr. Marshall prayed large two hours most divinely. After, Mr. Arrowsmith preached one hour, then a psalm, thereafter Mr. Vines prayed near two hours, and Mr. Palmer preached one hour, and Mr. Seaman prayed near two hours, then a psalm. After Mr. Henderson brought them to a short, sweet conference of the heart confessed in the assembly, and other seen faults to be remedied, and the convenience to preach against all sects, especially baptists and antinomians.' These prodigies of physical endurance in spiritual exercises were common in those days. Johnston of Warriston, intending to spend an hour or two in prayer, once carried his devotions from six in the morning until he was amazed by the bells ringing at eight in the evening.

There were learned scholars and theologians, but no governing churchman of the grand type rose up among them—nobody who at the same time comprehended states and the foundation of states, explored creeds and the sources of creeds, knew man and the heart of man. No Calvin appeared, nor Knox, nor Wesley, nor Chalmers. Alexander Henderson was possessed of many gifts in argument, persuasion, counsel, but he had not the spirit of action and command. Sincere presbyterians of to-day turn impatiently aside from what they call the miserable logomachies of the Westminster divines. Even in that unfruitful gymnastic, though they numbered pious and learned men, they had no athlete. They made no striking or original contribution to the

strong and compacted doctrines of Calvinistic faith. To turn over the pages of Lightfoot's journal of their proceedings is to understand what is meant by the description of our seventeenth century as the Middle Ages of protestantism. Just as mediæval schoolmen discussed the nature and existence of universals in one century, and the mysteries of immortality and a superhuman First Cause in another century, so now divines and laymen discussed predestination, justification, election, reprobation, and the whole unfathomable body of theological metaphysics by the same method—verbal logic drawing sterile conclusions from untested authority.

Happily it is not our concern to follow the divines as they went ploughing manfully through their Confession of Faith. They were far from accepting the old proposition of Bishop Hall that the most useful of all books of theology would be one with the title of 'De paucitate credendorum'—of the fewness of the things that a man should believe. After long and tough debates about the decrees of election, they had duly passed the heads of Providence, Redemption, Covenant, Justification, Free Will, and a part of Perseverance. And so they proceeded. The two sides plied one another with arguments oral and on paper, plea and replication, rejoinder and rebutter, surrejoinder and surrebutter. They contended, says honest Baillie, *tanquam pro aris et focis*—as if for hearth and altar.

It was not until May in 1647 that this famous exposition of theological truth was submitted to the

House of Commons. By that time parliament, in deep water, had other things to think of, and the Westminster Confession never received the sanction of the State. Nor did the two Catechisms, which, along with the Confession, are still the standards not only of the Church of Scotland, but of the great body of presbyterian churches grouped all over the English-speaking world, and numbering many millions of strenuous adherents. The effect of familiarity with the Shorter Catechism upon the intellectual character of the Scottish peasantry, and the connection between presbyterian government and a strongly democratic turn of thought and feeling in the community, are accepted commonplaces. Perhaps this fruit of the labours of the Westminster Assembly, appraise it as we may, was in one sense the most lasting and positive product of the far-famed Long Parliament that set it up and controlled it.

II.

A great group of questions one following another arose upon the very threshold of the Reformation. The Pope dislodged, tradition cast forth, the open Bible placed in the emptied shrine, fresh fountains of spiritual truth and life unsealed of which all save the children of reprobation might partake,—a long campaign of fierce battles was next fought on fields outside of purely theologic doctrine. What is the scriptural form of church government — prelacy, presbytery, or congregational independence? Who

was to inherit the authority of the courts spiritual—the civil magistrate or the purified and reconstituted church? Ought either bishop or synod to have coercive jurisdiction against the outward man, his liberty, life, or estate? Ought the state to impose one form of church government upon all citizens; or to leave to free choice both form of government and submission to discipline; or to favour one form, but without compulsion on individuals who favoured another? Ought the state to proscribe or punish the practices of any church or adhesion to any faith? These were the mighty problems that had now first been brought to the front in England by a great revolution, partly political, partly ecclesiastical, and wholly unconscious, like most revolutions, of its own drift, issues, and result. Few more determined struggles have ever been fought on our sacred national battle-ground at Westminster, than the contest between the Assembly of Divines and the parliament. The divines inspired from Scotland insisted that presbytery was of divine right. The majority of the parliament, true to English traditions and instinct, insisted that all church government was of human institution and depended on the will of the magistrate. The divines contended that presbytery and synod were to have the unfettered right of inflicting spiritual censures, and denying access to the communion-table to all whom they should choose to condemn as ignorant or scandalous persons. The parliament was as stubborn that these censures were to be confined to offences specified by law, and with

a right of appeal to a lay tribunal. It was the mortal battle so incessantly renewed in that age and since, between the principles of Calvin and Knox and the principles imputed to Erastus, the Swiss physician and divine, who had died at Heidelberg in 1583.

For ten days at a time the assembly debated the right of every particular congregation to ordain its own officers. For thirty days they debated the proposition that particular congregations ought to be united under one presbyterian government. In either case the test was scripture: what had happened to Timothy or Titus; how the church of Antioch had stood to the first church at Jerusalem; whether St. Paul had not written to the Philippians words that were a consecration of presbytery. The presbyterian majority besought the aid of a whole army of Dutch orthodox; they pressed for letters from France and from Geneva, which should contain grave and weighty admonitions to the assembly at Westminster, to be careful to suppress all schismatics, and the mother and fosterer of all mischief, the independence of congregations. On the other hand the half-dozen independents, whom Cromwell wished to strengthen by the addition of three divines of the right sort from New England, kept up a spirited resistance against the driving force of the orthodox current. A deliberative assembly tends to make party spirit obdurate. 'Oh, what may not pride do!' cries Baxter; 'and what miscarriages will not faction hide!' The Reconcilers, who called for unity in necessary things, liberty in things indifferent, and charity in all things, could not

be heard. The breach widened as time went on, and by 1645 its repair was hopeless. The conflict in its progress made more definite the schism between presbyterian and independent. It was the alliance of independent and Erastian in parliament that finally baffled the presbyterian after the Scottish model, and hardened the great division, until what had been legitimate difference on a disputable question became mutual hatred between two infuriated factions. Baillie says of the independents that it would be a marvel to him if such men should always prosper, their ways were so impious, unjust, ungrate, and every way hateful. One Coleman, an Erastian, gave good men much trouble by defending, with the aid of better lawyers than himself, the arguments of the Erastian doctor against the proposition that the founder of Christianity had instituted a church government distinct from the civil, to be exercised by the officers of the church without commission from the magistrates. Coleman was happily stricken with death; he fell in an ague, and after four or five days he expired. 'It is not good,' runs the dour comment, 'to stand in Christ's way.' The divines were too shrewd not to perceive how it was the military weakness of the Scots that allowed the independents with their heresies to ride rough-shod over them. If the Scots had only had fifteen thousand men in England, they said, their advice on doctrine and discipline would have been followed quickly enough; if the Scottish arms had only been successful last year, there would have been little abstract debating.

'It's neither reason nor religion that stays some men's rage, but a strong army bridling them with fear.' Such were the plain words of carnal wisdom. A story is told of a Scot and an Englishman disputing on the question of soldiers preaching. Quoth the Scot, 'Is it fit that Colonel Cromwell's soldiers should preach in their quarters, to take away the minister's function?' Quoth the Englishman, 'Truly I remember they made a gallant sermon at Marston Moor; that was one of the best sermons that hath been preached in the kingdom.' The fortune of war, in other words, carried with it the fortunes of theology and the churches.

We need not follow the vicissitudes of party, or the changing shadows of military and political events as they fell across the zealous scene. One incident of the time must be noted. While presbytery had been fighting its victorious battle in the Jerusalem Chamber, the man whose bad steering had wrecked his church was sent to the block. The execution of Archbishop Laud (January 10, 1645) is the best of all the illustrations of the hard temper of the age. Laud was more than seventy years old. He had been for nearly five years safe under lock and key in the Tower. His claws were effectually clipped, and it was certain that he would never again be able to do mischief, or if he were, that such mischief as he could do would be too trivial to be worth thinking of, in sight of such a general catastrophe as could alone make the old man's return to power possible. The execution of Strafford may be de-

fended as a great act of retaliation or prevention, done with grave political purpose. So, plausibly or otherwise, may the execution of King Charles. No such considerations justify the execution of Laud, several years after he had committed the last of his imputed offences and had been stripped of all power of ever committing more. It is not necessary that we should echo Dr. Johnson's lines about Rebellion's vengeful talons seizing on Laud, while Art and Genius hovered weeping round his tomb; but if we rend the veil of romance from the cavalier, we are bound not to be overdazzled by the halo of sanctity in the roundhead.

It was in 1646 that parliament consummated what would have seemed so extraordinary a revolution to the patriots of 1640, by the erection of the presbyterian system of Scotland, though with marked reservations of parliamentary control, into the established church of England. The uniformity that had rooted itself in Scotland, and had been the centre of the Solemn League and Covenant, was now nominally established throughout the island. But in name only. It was soon found in the case of church and state alike, that to make England break with her history is a thing more easily said than done, as it has ever been in all her ages. The presbyterian system struck no abiding root. The assembly, as a Scottish historian has pointedly observed, though called by an English parliament, held on English ground, and composed of English divines, with only a few Scotsmen among them, still,

as things turned out, existed and laboured mainly for Scotland.

III.

The deliberations of the divines were haunted throughout by the red spectre of Toleration. For the rulers of states a practical perplexity rose out of protestantism. How was a system resting on the rights of individual conscience and private reason to be reconciled with either authority or unity? The natural history of toleration seems simple, but it is in truth one of the most complex of all the topics that engage either the reasoner or the ruler; and until nations were by their mental state ready for religious toleration, a statesman responsible for order naturally paused before committing himself to a system that might only mean that the members of rival communions would fly at one another's throats, like catholics and Huguenots in France, or Spaniards and Beggars in Holland. In history it is our business to try to understand the possible reasons and motives for everything, even for intolerance.

Religious toleration was no novelty either in great books or in the tractates of a day. Men of broad minds, like More in England and L'Hôpital in France, had not lived for nothing; and though Bacon never made religious tolerance a political dogma, yet his exaltation of truth, knowledge, and wisdom tended to point that way. Nor should we forget that Cromwell's age is the age of Descartes and of Grotius, men whose lofty and spacious thinking, both directly

and indirectly, contributed to create an atmosphere of freedom and of peace in which it is natural for tolerance to thrive. To say nothing of others, the irony of Montaigne in the generation before Cromwell was born, had drawn the true moral from the bloodshed and confusion of the long fierce wars between catholic and Huguenot. Theories in books are wont to prosper or miscarry according to circumstances, but beyond theory, presbyterians at Westminster might have seen both in France and in Holland rival professions standing side by side, each protected by the state. At one moment, in this very era, no fewer than five protestants held the rank of marshals of France. The Edict of Nantes, indeed, while it makes such a figure in history (1598-1685), was much more of a forcible practical concordat, than a plan reposing on anybody's acceptance of a deliberate doctrine of toleration. It was never accepted by the clergy, any more than it was in heart accepted by the people. Even while the edict was in full force, it was at the peril of his authority with his flock that either catholic bishop or protestant pastor in France preached moderation toward the other communion. It was not French example, but domestic necessities, that here tardily brought toleration into men's minds. Helwys, Busher, Brown, sectaries whose names find no place in literary histories, had from the opening of the century argued the case for toleration, before the more powerful plea of Roger Williams; but the ideas and the practices of Amsterdam and Leyden had perhaps a wider influence than either colonial exiles

or homebred controversialists, in gradually producing a political school committed to freedom of conscience.

The limit set to toleration in the earlier and unclouded days of the Long Parliament had been fixed and definite. So far as catholics were concerned, Charles stood for tolerance, and the puritans for rigorous enforcement of persecuting laws. In that great protest for freedom, the Grand Remonstrance itself, they had declared it to be far from their purpose or desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the church, to leave private persons or particular congregations to take up what form of divine service they pleased; 'for we hold it requisite,' they went on to say, 'that there should be throughout the whole realm a conformity to that order which the laws enjoin according to the Word of God.' It was the rise of the independents to political power that made toleration a party question, and forced it into the salient and telling prominence that is reserved for party questions.

The presbyterian majority in principle answered the questions of toleration and uniformity just as Laud or the Pope would have answered them—one Church, one rule. The catholic built upon St. Peter's rock; the presbyterian built upon scripture. Just as firmly as the catholic, he believed in a complete and exclusive system, 'and the existence of a single separatist congregation was at once a blot on its beauty and a blow at its very basis' (Shaw). Liberty of conscience was in his eyes only liberty of error, and departure from uniformity only meant a hideous

deformity and multiformity of blaspheming sects. The independent and the baptist too were equally convinced of the scriptural source and the divine right of their own systems. It was political necessity that drove them reluctantly not only to work as partners with Erastian lawyers in parliament, but to extend the theoretic basis of their own claim for toleration until it comprehended the whole swarm of Anabaptists, Antinomians, Nullifidians, and the rest. Cromwell's toleration was different. It came easy to his natural temperament, when practical convenience recommended or demanded it. When he told Crawford early in the war that the state in choosing men to serve it takes no notice of their opinions, he struck the true note of toleration from the statesman's point of view. His was the practical temper, which first asks about a thing how far it helps or hinders the doing of some other given thing, and the question now with him was whether tolerance would help or hinder union and force in military strength and the general objects of the war.

A grander intellect than Cromwell's had entered the arena, for before the end of the year of Marston *Areopagitica* had appeared, the noble English classic of spiritual and speculative freedom. It was Milton's lofty genius that did the work of bringing a great universal idea into active relation with what all men could understand, and what all practical men wished for. There were others, indeed, who set the doctrine of toleration in a fuller light; but in Milton's writings on church government he satisfies as well as Socinus, or Roger Williams, or any of his age, the test that has

been imposed of making toleration 'at once a moral, a political, and a theological dogma.' With him the law of tolerance is no birth of scepticism or languor or indifference. It is no statesman's argument for reconciling freedom of conscience with public order,—'toleration being a part,' as Burke called it, 'of moral and political prudence.' Nor is it a pungent intellectual demonstration, like Bayle's half a century later. Intolerance with Milton is dishonour to the victim, dishonour to the tyrant. The fountain-head from which every worthy enterprise issues forth is a pious and just honouring of ourselves; it is the sanctity and freedom of the man's own soul. On this austere self-esteem the scornful distinction between lay and cleric is an outrage. The coercive power of ecclesiastics is an impious intrusion into the inner sanctuary. Shame may enter, and remorse and reverence for good men may enter, and a dread of becoming a lost wanderer from the communion of the just and holy may enter, but never the boisterous and secular tyranny of an unlawful and unscriptural jurisdiction. Milton's moving argument, at once so delicate and so haughty, for the rights and self-respecting obligations of 'that inner man which may be termed the spirit of the soul,' is the hidden mainspring of the revolt against formalism, against authority, and almost against church organization in any of its forms. And it is the true base of toleration. Alas, even Milton halts and stammers when he comes to ask himself why, on the same arguments, popery may not plead for toleration. Here he can only fall back upon the regulation commonplaces.

Milton's ideas, which were at the heart of Cromwell's vaguer and less firmly moulded thinking, were in direct antagonism to at least three broad principles that hitherto ruled the minds of men. These ideas were fatal to Uniformity of belief, not merely as a thing within reach, but as an object to be desired. They shattered and destroyed Authority, whether of clergy or laity, or of a king by the grace of God. Finally, they dealt one of the blows that seem so naturally to mark the course of all modern revolutions, to History as a moral power. For it is the essence of every appeal to reason or to the individnal conscience to discard the heavy woven garments of tradition, custom, inheritance, prerogative, and ancient institution. History becomes, in Milton's own exorbitant phrase, no more than the perverse iniquity of sixteen hundred years. Uniformity, authority, history—to shake these was to move the foundations of the existing world in England. History, however, shows itself a standing force. It is not a dead, but a living hand. The sixteen hundred years that Milton found so perverse had knit fibres into our national growth that even Cromwell and all the stern fervour of puritanism were powerless to pluck out.

IV.

Events made toleration in its full Miltonic breadth the shibboleth. In principle and theory it enlarged its way both in parliament and the army, in association with the general ideas of political liberalism, and

became a practical force. Every war tends to create a peace party, even if for no other cause, yet from the innate tendency of men to take sides. By the end of the year of Marston Moor, political differences of opinion upon the terms of peace had become definitely associated with the ecclesiastical difference between presbyterian and independent. The presbyterians were the peace men, and the independents were for relentless war until the ends of war should be gained. Henceforth these are the two great party names, and of the independents Cromwell's energy and his military success rapidly made him the most powerful figure.

When it was that Cromwell embraced independent views of church organization, we cannot with precision tell, nor does it matter. He deferred signing the presbyterian covenant as long as possible (February 1644). He was against exclusion and proscription, but on grounds of policy, and from no reasoned attachment to the ideal of a free or congregational church. He had a kindness for zealots, because zeal, enthusiasm, almost fanaticism, was in its best shape his own temper, and even in its worst shape promoted or protected his own policy. When his policy of war yet hung in the balance, it was the independents who by their action, views, and temper created his opportunity. By their warmth and sincerity they partially impressed him with their tenets, and opened his mind to a range of new ideas that lay beyond their own. Unhappily in practice when the time came, puritan toleration went little further than Anglican intolerance.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW MODEL.

I.

After the victory at Marston, followed as it was by the surrender of York, men expected other decisive exploits from Lord Manchester and his triumphant army. He was directed to attend on the motions of the indomitable Rupert, in whom the disaster before the walls of York seemed to have stirred fresh energy. Manchester saw a lion in every path. The difficulties he made were not devoid of reason, but a nation in a crisis seeks a general whom difficulties confront only to be overcome.

Essex (September 1644) had been overtaken by grievous disaster in the south-west. Escaping by sea from Plymouth, he left his army to find their way out by fighting or surrender as best they could. So great was his influence and popularity, that even in face of this miscarriage, Essex almost at once received a new command. Manchester was to co-operate with him in resisting the king's eastward march from Cornwall to his fixed headquarters at Oxford. He professes to obey, but he loiters, delays, and finds

excuses, until even the Derby House Committee lose patience, and send a couple of their members to kindle a little fire in him, just as in the next century the French Convention used to send two commissioners to spur on the revolutionary generals. 'Destroy but the king's army,' cried Waller, 'and the work is ended.' At length the forces of Essex, Waller, and Manchester combined, and attacked the king at Newbury. In this second battle of Newbury (October 27, 1644), though the parliamentarians under Manchester and Waller were nearly two to one, the result was so little conclusive that the king made his way almost without pursuit from the field. He even returned within a fortnight, offered battle once more on the same ground, and as the challenge was declined returned at his ease to Oxford.

At length vexation at inactivity and delay grew so strong that Cromwell (November 25), seizing the apt moment as was his wont, startled the House by opening articles of charge against his commander. Manchester, he said, ever since the victory of Marston Moor, had acted as if he deemed that to be enough; had declined every opportunity of further advantage upon the enemy; and had lost occasion upon occasion, as if he thought the king too low and the parliament too high. No man had ever less in him than Cromwell of the malcontent subordinate. 'At this time,' Waller says of him early in 1645, 'he had never shown extraordinary parts, nor do I think he did himself believe that he had them; for although he was blunt, he did not bear himself with pride or disdain. As an officer

he was obedient, and did never dispute my orders or argue upon them.' His letters to Fairfax at a later date are a pattern of the affectionate loyalty due from a man second in command to a general whom he trusts. What alarmed him was not Manchester's backwardness in action, his aversion to engagement, his neglect of opportunities, but the growing certainty that there was behind all this half-heartedness some actual principle of downright unwillingness to prosecute the war to a full victory, and a deliberate design not to push the king too hard nor to reduce him too low. Cromwell recalled many expressions of Manchester that plainly betrayed a desire not to end the war by the sword, but to make a peace on terms that were to his own taste. On one occasion the advocates of a fight urged that to let the king get off unassailed would strengthen his position at home and abroad, whereas if they only beat him now, he and his cause were for ever ruined. Manchester vehemently urged the alternative risks. 'If we beat the king ninety-nine times,' he cried, 'he will be king still and his posterity, and we subjects still; but if he beat us but once, we shall be hanged and our posterity undone.' 'If that be so,' said Cromwell, 'why did we take up arms at first? This is against fighting ever hereafter. If so, let us make peace, let it be never so basely.'

Recriminations were abundant. The military question became a party question. It was loudly flung out that on one of the disputed occasions nobody was so much against fighting as Cromwell, and that

after Newbury Cromwell, when ordered to bring up his horse, asked Manchester in a discontented manner whether he intended to flay the horse, for if he gave them more work he might have their skins, but he would have no service. He once made a speech very nearly quarter of an hour long against running the risk of an attack. While insinuating now that Manchester had not acted on the advice of his councils of war, yet had he not at the time loudly declared that any man was a villain and a liar who said any such thing? He was always attributing to himself all the praise of other men's actions. Going deeper than such stories as these, were the reports of Cromwell's inflammatory sayings; as that he once declared to Lord Manchester his hatred of all peers, wishing there was never a lord in England, and that it would never be well till Lord Manchester was plain Mr. Montagu. Then he expressed himself with contempt of the Westminster divines, of whom he said that they were persecutors of honester men than themselves. He desired to have none in the army but such as were of the independent judgment, because these would withstand any peace but such as honest men would aim at. He vowed that if he met the king in battle, he would as lief fire his pistol at the king as at anybody else. Of their brethren the Scots he had used contumelious speech, and had even said that he would as cheerfully draw the sword upon them as upon any in the army of the king.

The exasperation to which events had brought both the energetic men like Cromwell, and the slower men like Essex, had reached a dangerous pitch. One

evening, very late, the two lawyers Whitelocke and Maynard were summoned to attend Lord Essex. They found the Scottish commissioners with him, along with Holles, Stapleton, and others of the presbyterian party. The question was whether by English law Cromwell could be tried as an incendiary, as one who kindles coals of contention and raises differences in the state to the public damage. Of this move the Scots were the authors. 'Cromwell is no good friend of ours,' they said, 'and ever since our army came into England he has used all underhand and cunning means to detract from our credit.' He was no friend either to their church. Besides that, he was little of a well-wisher to the lord-general whom they had such good reason to love and honour. Was there law enough in England to clip his wings?

The lawyers gave a sage reply. English law, they said, knows, but not very familiarly, the man who kindles the burning flames of contention. But were there proofs that Oliver was such an incendiary? It would never do for persons of so great honour and authority as Essex and the Scots to go upon ground of which they were not sure. Again, had they considered the policy of the thing? 'I take Lieutenant-General Cromwell,' said Whitelocke, 'to be a gentleman of quick and subtle parts, and one who hath, especially of late, gained no small interest in the House of Commons; nor is he wanting of friends in the House of Peers, or of abilities in himself to manage his own defence to the best advantage.' The bitter Holles and his presbyterian group were very keen for

proceeding: they thought that there was plenty of evidence, and they did not believe Cromwell to be so strong in the Commons as was supposed. In the end it was the Scots who judiciously saved their English allies from falling into the scrape, and at two o'clock in the morning the party broke up. Whitelocke or another secretly told Cromwell what had passed, with the result that he only grew more eager than before.

II.

A hundred and thirty years later a civil war again broke out among the subjects of the British crown. The issues were not in form the same. Cromwell fought for the supremacy of parliament within the kingdom; Washington fought against the supremacy of parliament over Englishmen across the Atlantic Ocean. It is possible that if Charles I. had been as astute and as unscrupulous as George III., the struggle on the English ground might have run a different course. However that may be, in each case the two wars were in their earlier stages not unlike, and both Marston Moor and Bunker Hill rank amongst those engagements that have a lasting significance in history, where military results were secondary to moral effect. It was these encounters that first showed that the champions of the popular cause intended and were able to make a stand-up fight against the forces of the monarchy. In each case the combatants expected the conflict to be short. In each case the battle of popular liberty was first fought by weak bodies, ill-paid, ill-

disposed to discipline, mounted on cart-horses and armed with fowling-pieces, mainly anxious to get back to their homes as soon as they could, and fluctuating from month to month with the humours, the jealousies, or the means of the separate counties in England, or the separate States in America. 'Short enlistments,' said Washington, 'and a mistaken dependence on militia, have been the origin of all our misfortunes; the evils of a standing army are remote, but the consequence of wanting one is certain and inevitable ruin. To carry on the war systematically, you must establish your army on a permanent and national footing.' What Washington said in 1776 was just what Cromwell said in 1644.

The system had broken down. Officers complained that their forces melted away, because men thought they would be better treated in other counties, and all comers were welcomed by every association. One general grumbles that another general is favoured in money and supplies. The governors of strong towns are in hot feud with the committee of the town. Furious passages took place between pressed men and the county committees. Want of pay made the men sulky and mutinous, and there were always 'evil instruments' ready to trade on such moods.

The Committee of Both Kingdoms write to a colonel commanding in the west in the year of Naseby, that they have received very great complaints from the country of the intolerable miscarriage of his troopers; already great disservice is done to the parliament by the robbing, spoiling, and plundering of the people,

they also giving extreme offence by their swearing, drinking, and all kinds of debaucheries. Exemplary punishment should be inflicted upon such notorious misdemeanants. The sufferings of some parts of the country were almost unbearable. The heavy exactions of the Scots in Cumberland and Westmorland for month after month brought the inhabitants of those counties to despair, 'and necessity forced the distressed people in some parts to stand upon their defence against the taxings and doing of the soldiers.' In Northumberland and Durham the charges on the farmers were so heavy that the landlord had little or nothing, and was only too glad if his tenants could but keep a fire in the farmhouses and save them from ruin. The Yorkshire men complained that they were rated in many districts for the Scottish horse at more than double the value of their lands in the best times. On each side at this time the soldiers lived in the main upon plunder. They carried off cattle and cut down crops. They sequestered rents and assessed fines. They kept up a multitude of small forts and garrisons as a shelter to flying bands, who despoiled the country and fought off enemies who would fain have done the same, and could have done no worse.

Apart from the waste and brutality intrinsic in war, the general breakdown of economic order might well alarm the instincts of the statesman. 'Honest industry,' cried one voice of woe, 'is quite discouraged, being almost useless. Most men that have estates are betrayed by one side or another, plundered, sequestered. Trading — the life and substance of

thousands—decaying, eaten up with taxes; your poor quite ready to famish, or to rise to pull relief from rich men's hands by violence. Squeezed by taxes, racked by war, the anvil, indeed, of misery, upon which all the strokes of vengeance fell.' A covetous eye had long been cast upon the endowments of the church. 'The stop of trade here,' Baillie wrote even so far back as 1641, 'has made this people much poorer than ordinary; they will noways be able to bear their burden if the cathedrals fall not.' From its first phases in all countries the Reformation of faith went with designs upon the church lands. And so it was in England now.

'You will never get your service done,' said Waller, 'until you have an army entirely your own, and at your own command.' This theme was the prime element in the New Model—the substitution of one army under a single commander-in-chief, supported by the parliament, instead of sectional armies locally levied and locally paid. The second feature was the weeding out of worthless men, a process stigmatized by presbyterians out of temper as a crafty means of filling the army with sectaries, a vile compound of Jew, Christian, and Turk, mere tools of usurping ambition. The third was the change in the command. The new army was intrusted to Sir Thomas Fairfax as commander-in-chief, with liberty to name his own officers subject to ratification by the two Houses. The honest Skippon, a valiant fighter and a faithful man, was made major-general, and the higher post of lieutenant-general was left significantly open. The

army of which Essex was lord-general numbered on paper twenty-five thousand foot and five thousand horse. In 1644 it was fixed at seven thousand foot and three thousand five hundred horse. The army of the New Model was to consist of twenty-two thousand men in all, fourteen thousand four hundred being foot and the rest horse and dragoons. A trooper received about what he would have received for labour at the plough or with the waggon.

The average substantive wealth in the army was not high. Royalists were fond of taunting them with their meagre means, and vowed that the whole pack of them from the lord-general to the horse-farrier could not muster one thousand pounds a year in land among them. Yet in Fairfax's new army, of the officers of the higher military rank no fewer than thirty out of thirty-seven were men of good family. Pride the drayman, and Hewson the cobbler, and Okey the ship-chandler, were among the minority who rose from the common ranks. When Cromwell spoke to Hampden about an army of decayed serving-men and tapsters, his own men had never been of the tapster tribe. They were most of them freeholders and freeholders' sons, who upon matter of conscience engaged in the quarrel, and 'thus being well armed within by the satisfaction of their own consciences, and without by good iron arms, they would as one man stand firmly and charge desperately.'

That was the ideal of the New Model. We cannot, however, assume that it was easy or possible to procure twenty thousand men of militant conscience,

willing for the cause to leave farm and shop, wife and home, to submit themselves to iron discipline, and to face all the peril of battle, murder, and sudden death. Even if Cromwell's ideal was the prevailing type, it has been justly pointed out that constant pay must have been a taking inducement to volunteers in a time when social disorder had made work scarce. If we remember, again, that a considerable portion of the new army were not even volunteers, but had been impressed against their will, the influence of puritan zeal can hardly have been universal, even if it were so much as general.

Baxter had good opportunity of knowing the army well, though he did not see with impartial eyes, and he found abundance of the common troopers to be honest, sober, and right-thinking men, many of them tractable, ready to hear the truth, and of upright intentions. But the highest places he found filled by proud, self-conceited, hot-headed sectaries, Cromwell's chief favourites. Then, in a sentence, he unwittingly discloses why Cromwell favoured them. 'By their very heat and activity,' he says, 'they bore down the rest and carried them along; these were the soul of the army, though they did not number one to twenty in it.' In other words, what Baxter says comes to this, that they had the quality of fire and resolution; and fire and resolution are what every leader in a revolutionary crisis values more than all else, even though his own enthusiasm in the common cause springs from other fountains of belief or runs in other channels. Anabaptists, Brownists, Familists,

and the rest of the many curious swarms from the puritan hive, none of them repelled Oliver, because he knew that the fanatic and the zealot, for all their absurdities, had the root of the matter in them.

There were several steps in the process of military transformation. In December the Commons, acting upon Cromwell's argument from the suspicion with which people looked upon Lords and Commoners in places of high command, passed the famous ordinance by which no member of either House should have any office of civil or military command. In January the handful who now composed the House of Lords threw out this ordinance. A scheme for the New Model was sent up to them in February, and in the middle of that month (1645) the new military constitution was finally accepted. Six weeks later the Self-denying Ordinance was brought back and passed in a revised form (April 3), only enacting that within forty days members of either of the two Houses should resign any post that the parliament had entrusted to them. Essex, Manchester, Denbigh, Warwick, Waller, resigned without waiting for the forty days. It must have been an anxious moment, for Essex was still popular with the great body of the army, and if he had chosen to defy the ordinance he might possibly have found support both in public opinion and in military force. 'But he was not for such enterprises,' says Clarendon, with caustic touch. Honourable and unselfish men have not been so common in the history of states and armies, that we need approve the sarcasm.

Cromwell followed a line that was peculiar, but might easily have been foretold. The historian in our own day tells us that he finds it hard to avoid the conclusion that Cromwell was ready to sacrifice his own unique position in the army, and to retire from military service. This is surely not easy to believe, any more than it is easy to believe another story for which the evidence comes to extremely little, that at another time he meant to take service in Germany. It is true that in inspiring and supporting the first version of the Self-denying Ordinance, Oliver seemed to be closing the chapter of his own labours in the field. Yet nobody can deny that his proceedings were oblique.[1] It is incredible that the post of lieutenant-general should have been left vacant, otherwise than by design. It is incredible that even those who were most anxious to pull Cromwell down, should not have foreseen that if the war was to go on, the most successful and popular of all their generals would inevitably be recalled. In Cromwell it would have been an incredibly foolish underestimate of himself to suppose that his own influence, his fierce energy, his determination, and his natural gift of the military eye, could all be spared at an hour when the struggle was drawing to its most hazardous stage.

What actually happened was this. The second

[1] Mr. Gardiner dissents. Cromwell, he says, is not shown to have had any hand in shaping the details of the Ordinance ; and all that the omission to name a lieutenant-general proves, is that there were many influential members of the House who thought that Cromwell should be kept in his old post

Self-denying Ordinance was passed on April 3, and Cromwell was bound to lay down all military command within forty days. Meanwhile he was despatched towards the west. The end of the forty days found him in the Oxford country. The parliament passed a special ordinance, not without misgivings in the Lords, extending his employment for forty days more until June 22. Before the expiry of this new term, Fairfax and the officers, following the Common Council who had demanded it before, petitioned the Houses to sanction the appointment of Cromwell to the vacant post of lieutenant-general with command of the horse. The Commons agreed (June 10), and Fairfax formally appointed him. At the moment, Cromwell had been sent from Oxford (May 26) into the eastern counties to protect the Isle of Ely. He was taken by legal fiction or in fact to have complied with the Self-denying Ordinance by resigning, and strictly speaking his appointment required the assent of both Houses. But the needs of the time were too sharp for ceremony. The campaign had now begun that almost in a few hours was to end in the ever-famous day of Naseby.

CHAPTER V.

THE DAY OF NASEBY.

I.

ARMED puritanism was now first to manifest all its strength. Faith that the God of Battles was on their side nerved its chosen and winnowed ranks with stern confidence. The fierce spirit of the Old Testament glowed like fire in their hearts. But neither these moral elements of military force, nor discipline, technical precision, and iron endurance, would have sufficed to win the triumph at Naseby without the intrepid genius of Oliver. This was the day on which the great soldier was first to show himself, in modern phrase, a Man of Destiny.

The earliest movements of the campaign of 1645, which was to end in the destruction of the king's arms, were confused and unimportant. The Committee of Both Kingdoms hardly knew what to do with the new weapon now at their command, and for many weeks both Fairfax and Cromwell were employed in carrying out ill-conceived orders in the west. In May Charles left his headquarters at Oxford, with a design of marching through the midlands northward. On the

last day of the month he took Leicester by storm. The committee at Westminster were filled with alarm. Was it possible that he intended an invasion of their stronghold in the eastern counties? Fairfax, who lay before the walls of Oxford, was immediately directed to raise the siege and follow the king.

The modern soldier is struck all through the war with the ignorance on both sides of the movements, plans, and position of the enemy. By June 13 the two armies were in Northamptonshire, only some seven miles apart, Fairfax at Guilsborough, Charles at Daventry; and yet it was not until the parliamentary scouts were within sight of the royalist camp that the advance of Fairfax became known. The royalists undoubtedly made a fatal mistake in placing themselves in the way of Fairfax after they had let Goring go; and the cause of their mistake was the hearty contempt entertained by the whole of them from king to drummer for the raw army and its clownish recruits. The cavaliers had amused themselves, we are told, by cutting a wooden image in the shape of a man, and 'in such a form as they blasphemously called it the god of the roundheads, and this they carried in scorn and contempt of our army in a public manner a little before the battle began.' So confident were they of teaching the rabble a lesson. Doubting friends thought as ill of the New Model as did overweening foes. 'Their new-modelled army,' says Baillie, like all the presbyterians at this moment hardly knowing what he ought to wish, 'consists for the most part of raw, unexperienced, pressed soldiers. Few of the officers are thought

capable of their places; many of them are sectaries; if they do great service, many will be deceived.'

Disaster, however, was not to be. Cromwell, as we have seen, had been ordered off eastward, to take measures for the defence of the Isle of Ely. These commands, says a contemporary, 'he, in greater tenderness of the public service than of his own honour, in such a time of extremity disputed not but fulfilled.' After securing Ely, he applied himself to active recruiting in Cambridgeshire with the extraordinary success that always followed his inspiring energy. As soon as the king's movements began to create uneasiness, Fairfax, knowing Cromwell's value as commander of horse, applied in haste to the parliament that he should be specially permitted to serve as lieutenant-general. The Houses after some demur gave him plenary leave accordingly. The general despatched constant expresses to Cromwell himself, to inform him from time to time where the army was, so that he might know in case of danger where to join them. When he found battle to be imminent, Oliver hastened over the county border as hard as he and six hundred horsemen with him could ride. They rode into Fairfax's quarters at six o'clock on the morning of June 13, and were hailed with the liveliest demonstrations of joy by the general and his army. 'For it had been observed,' says an onlooker of those days, 'that God was with him, and that affairs were blessed under his hand.' He was immediately ordered to take command of the marshalling of the horse. There was not an instant to lose, for before the field-officers could

even give a rough account of the arrangements of the army, the enemy came on amain in excellent order, while the plan of the parliamentary commanders was still an embryo. This was the moment that Cromwell has himself in glowing phrase described: 'I can say this of Naseby, that when I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order towards us, and we a company of poor ignorant men, to seek how to order our battle—the general having commanded me to order all the horse—I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in praises, in assurance of victory, because God would by things that are not bring to naught things that are.'

The number of men engaged, like the manœuvres that preceded the battle, is a matter of much uncertainty. One good contemporary authority puts the parliamentary forces at 11,000, and says that the two armies were about equal. Mr. Gardiner, on the other hand, believes the parliamentarians to have been 13,600, and the royalists only 7500, or not much more than one to two—a figure that is extremely hard to reconcile with two admitted facts. One is, that nobody puts the number of royalist prisoners lower than four thousand (and one contemporary even makes them six thousand), while the slain are supposed to have been not less than one thousand. This would mean the extinction by death or capture of two-thirds of the king's total force, and no contemporary makes the disaster so murderous as this. The admission, again, that the royalist cavalry after the battle was practically intact, increases the difficulty of accepting so low an

estimate for the total of the king's troops, for nobody puts the royalist horse under four thousand. The better opinion undoubtedly seems to be that, though Fairfax's troops outnumbered the king's, yet the superiority can hardly have approached the proportion of two to one.

The country was open, and the only fences were mere double hedges with an open grass track between them, separating Naseby from Sulby on the west and Clipston on the east. On the right of Fairfax's line, where Cromwell and his troopers were posted, the action of cavalry was much hindered by rabbit burrows, and at the bottom there was boggy land equally inconvenient to the horsemen of the king. The level of the parliamentary position was some fifty feet, that of the royalist position not more than thirty, above the open hollow between them. The slope was from three to four degrees, thus offering little difficulty of incline to either horse or foot.

If the preliminary manœuvres cannot be definitely made out in detail, nor carried beyond a choice of alternative hypotheses each as good as the other, the actual battle is as plain as any battle on rather meagre and fragmentary reports can be considered plain. As usual on both sides, the infantry were posted in the centre, with the cavalry on either flank. Fairfax seems to have taken up his ground on the ledge of the hill running from east to west. Then, possibly at Cromwell's suggestion, he drew his men back a hundred paces from the ledge, so as to keep out of the enemy's sight, knowing that he could recover the advantage

when he pleased. Such, so far as can be made out from very entangled evidence, is the simplest view of Fairfax's position. Cromwell in command of the horse was stationed on the parliamentary right, and Ireton on the left. The veteran Skippon commanded regiments of foot in the centre. On the opposite slope across Broadmoor Rupert faced Ireton, and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, with his northern horse in the doubtful humour of men who wished to go homeward, faced Cromwell, while Lord Astley led the infantry in the centre. Fairfax directed the disposition of his men, and was conspicuous during the three hours of the engagement by his energy, vigilance, and persistence. He was by constitution a slow-footed man, but when he drew near action in the field then another spirit came upon him, men said, and another soul looked out of his eyes. King Charles, though inferior in military capacity, was not behind him in either activity or courage.

The word was on the one side 'Mary,' the king's favourite name for the queen; on the other side, 'God with us.' The royalists opening the attack advanced their whole line a hundred yards or so across the flat and up the slope toward the opposite ridge. The parliamentarians came into view upon the brow from which they had recently retired. In a few moments the foot in the centre were locked in stubborn conflict. They discharged their pieces, and then fell to it with clubbed muskets and with swords. The royalist infantry pressed Skippon so hard, that his first line at last gave way and fell back on the reserve. Ireton,

with his horse on the parliamentary left, launched one of his divisions to help the foot on his right, but with little advantage to them and with disaster to himself. For Rupert, dashing through the smart musketry fire from Okey's dragoons posted behind Sulby hedges, came crashing with irresistible weight upon the other portion of Ireton's horse on the western slope of the ridge, broke them up, and pursued the scattered force toward Naseby village. On the right meanwhile things had gone better, for here Cromwell stood. He had detailed a force of his cavalry under Whalley to meet Langdale in front with the royalist left wing, and he himself swept round on to Langdale's left flank with the main body of his own horse. Whalley thundering down the slope caught the left of the opposing horse with terrific impetus, before the enemy could charge up the higher ground. Nothing could stand against him. Oliver's charge on the other flank completed Langdale's ruin, some of the enemy dashing in headlong flight from the field, others finding their way to the king's reserve, and there halting huddled together until they were by and by re-formed. They were mainly from Yorkshire and the north, and had gone into battle with half a heart. Such was Cromwell's first onset.

The main battle was less victorious. The right of the parliamentary foot stood firm, but the rest being overpressed gave ground and fell back in disorder. The officers made fruitless attempts to check the confusion of their inexperienced forces, and were obliged to fall into the reserves with their colours, 'choosing rather to fight and die than to quit the

ground they stood on.' It was at this point that Cromwell executed his second movement; it was the crisis of the battle. With singular exactness he repeated the tactics that had won the memorable day at Marston. There as here—Cromwell's wing victorious, the other wing worsted, the foot in the centre hard pressed, Cromwell re-forming to the rescue. Rupert, like Goring's men at Marston, instead of leaving a detachment to pursue Ireton's fugitive horse, and turning to help the king's infantry in their work at the centre, lost time and a decisive opportunity. Cromwell, as at Marston, observing the difficulties of the parliamentary foot, collected his whole force, save one regiment detailed to watch or pursue the flight of Langdale's horsemen, formed them again in line, set a new front toward the left flank of the enemy's foot, and flung them with uplifted right arms and flashing swords to the relief of the hotly pressed infantry of Fairfax and Skippon. One of the royalist brigades offered an obstinate resistance. 'The parliamentarians strove hard to break them, but even the Ironsides could not drive them in, they standing with incredible courage and resolution, though we attempted them in flank, front, and rear.' No impression was made until Fairfax called up his own regiment of foot. Then the stubborn brigade of royalists gave way, and in a short time there was little left in the whole of the field but the remnant of the king's horse. Though some, says the modern soldier, may hold Marston to offer a greater variety of striking pictures and moments of

more intensity (Hönig, i. 203), there is scarcely a battle in history where cavalry was better handled than at Naseby. In the tactics of Naseby this second charge of the Cromwellian horse stands out conspicuous for skill and vigour.

There was still, however, one more move to make before victory was secure. Though aware of the disaster that was overwhelming him, the king strove bravely to rally the broken horse of his left wing. He was joined by Rupert, at last returning from the baggage-waggons and Naseby village, with his men and horses exhausted and out of breath. Here the royalists made their last stand. It was in vain. The parliamentary generals with extraordinary alacrity prepared for a final charge, and their preparation was hardly made before all was over and the day won. Ireton, though severely wounded in the beginning of the battle, had got his men together again, and he took an active part in the new attack. The parliamentary foot, who had been thrown into disorder by the first charge, and had then rallied 'in a shorter time than imaginable,' now advanced at the top of their speed to join the horse. For Oliver had got his force of cavalry once more in hand, and made ready to bear down on the enemy for a third and final charge. The horsemen were again drawn up in two wings within carbine-shot of the enemy, 'leaving a wide space between the wings for the battle of the foot to fall in. Thereby,' says the eye-witness, 'there was framed, as it were in a trice, a second good battalia at the latter end of the day, which the enemy

perceiving, and that if they stood they must expect a second charge from our horse, foot, and artillery (they having lost all their foot and guns before), and our dragoons having already begun to fire upon their horse, they not willing to abide a second shock upon so great disadvantage as there was like to be, immediately ran away, both fronts and reserves, without standing one stroke more.' To the king, gallantly heading his line, a curious and characteristic thing happened. Lord Carnwath riding by his side suddenly laid his hand upon the king's bridle, and swearing sundry Scotch oaths, cried out, 'Will you go upon your death in an instant?' 'Then,' says Clarendon, 'before the king understood what he would have, he turned his horse round, and upon that they all turned their horses and rode upon the spur, as if they were every man to shift for himself.'

The fight, which was desperately maintained at every point while it endured, with its issue often doubtful, lasted three hours. The killed and wounded and the prisoners were about five thousand. The Irish camp-followers were slaughtered in cold blood. All the king's guns, all his waggons and carriages, his colours and standards were taken, and, worst of all, his private cabinet containing his most secret correspondence and papers. This did him an injury almost as deep as the loss of a battle, for the letters disclosed his truthlessness and the impossibility of ever trusting him.

Toward the end of May, Digby writes in one of his letters, 'Ere one month be over, we shall have a battle

of all for all.' The prediction came true. If the battle had gone the other way, Goring and the king would have marched up to London, heartening their men with the promise of the spoil of the richest city in the realm, and the presence of Charles and his army in the metropolis might have created a situation that nothing could retrieve. Even now the king had not lost his crown. Time had still golden opportunities to offer him. Yet Naseby was one of the decisive battles of English history. It destroyed the last organized force that Charles was able to raise; it demonstrated that the New Model had produced an invincible army; it transformed the nature of the struggle and the conditions of the case; it released new interests and new passions; it changed the balance of parties; and it brought Cromwell into decisive pre-eminence in all men's minds.

II.

Cromwell's own account of Naseby is the tersest bulletin on record, but he takes care to draw a political moral for the hot party struggle then going on at Westminster. 'Honest men,' he writes to the Speaker, 'served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you, in the name of God, not to discourage them. I wish their actions may beget thankfulness and humility in all that are concerned in it. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he

fights for.' In plainer words, the House of Commons should not forget how much the independents had to do with the victory, and that what the independents fought for was above all else liberty of conscience.

For the king the darkness was lightened by a treacherous ray of hope from Scotland. The Scots, whose aid had been of such decisive value to the parliament at the end of 1643 on the stricken field at Marston in the summer of 1644, and in the seizure of Newcastle three months later, had been since of little use. At Naseby they had no part nor lot, and they even looked on that memorable day with a surly eye: although it had indeed broken the malignants, it had mightily exalted the independents. A force of Scots still remained on English ground, but they were speedily wanted in their own country. One of the fiercest of the lesser episodes of the war happened in Scotland, where in the northern Highlands and elsewhere the same feeling for the national line of their princes came into life among chieftains and clansmen, that survived with so many romantic circumstances and rash adventures down to the rebellion of 1745.

In August 1644, Montrose, disguised as a groom and accompanied by two of his friends, rode across the south-western border from Carlisle and made his way to Athole. There he was joined by a mixed contingent of Highlanders and twelve hundred Irish, lately brought over under Highland leadership into Argyllshire. This was the beginning of a flame of royalism that blazed high for a year, was marked by

much savagery and destruction, left three or four new names upon the historic scroll of the bloody scuffles between Campbells, Forbeses, Frasers, Macleans, Macdonalds, Gordons, Ogilvies, Grahams, and the rest, and then finally died down at the battle of Philiphaugh. Montrose reached the top of his success at the engagement of Kilsyth, just two months after Naseby. In another month the rushing meteor went out. David Leslie, who fought at Cromwell's side at Marston Moor and was now on duty in England, took his force up to the border, crossed the Tweed, found Montrose and his ragged and scanty force of clansmen encamped at Philiphaugh, near Selkirk (September 13, 1645), and there fell suddenly upon them, shattering into empty air both Montrose's fantasies and the shadowy hopes of the dreaming king.

Charles's resolution was still unshaken. As he told Digby, if he could not live like a king, he would die like a gentleman. Six weeks after the fatal battle he writes to Prince Rupert (Aug. 3): 'I confess that, speaking either as a mere soldier or statesman, I must say that there is no probability but of my ruin. But as a Christian, I must tell you that God will not suffer rebels and traitors to prosper, or this cause to be overthrown. And whatever personal punishment it shall please him to inflict upon me must not make me repine, much less to give over this quarrel. Indeed, I cannot flatter myself with expectations of good success more than this, to end my days with honour and a good conscience, which obliges me to continue my endeavours, as not despairing that God may in due time

avenge his own cause. Though I must avow to all my friends that he that will stay with me at this time, must expect and resolve either to die for a good cause, or (which is worse) to live as miserable in maintaining it as the violence of insulting rebels can make it.'

This patient stoicism, which may attract us when we read about it in a book, was little to the mind of the shrewd soldier to whom the king's firm words were written. Rupert knew that the cause was lost, and had counselled an attempt to come to terms. A disaster only second to Naseby and still more unforeseen soon followed. After a series of victorious operations in the west at Langport, Bridgewater, Bath, and Sherborne, Fairfax and Cromwell laid siege to Bristol, and after a fierce and daring storm (September 10) Rupert, who had promised the king that he could hold out for four good months, suddenly capitulated and rode away to Oxford under the humiliating protection of a parliamentary convoy. The fall of this famous stronghold of the west was the severest of all the king's mortifications, as the failure of Rupert's wonted courage was the strangest of military surprises. That Rupert was too clear-sighted not to be thoroughly discouraged by the desperate aspect of the king's affairs is certain, and the military difficulties of sustaining a long siege were thought, even by those who had no reasons to be tender of his fame, to justify the surrender. The king would listen to no excuses, but wrote Rupert an angry letter, declaring so mean an action to be the greatest trial of his

constancy that had yet happened, depriving him of his commissions, and bidding him begone beyond the seas. Rupert nevertheless insisted on following the king to Newark, and after some debate was declared to be free of all disloyalty or treason, but not of indiscretion. Another quarrel arose between the king and his nephews and their partisans. The feuds and rivalries of parliament at their worst, were always matched by the more ignoble distractions and jealousies of the court. Suspicions even grew up that Rupert and Maurice were in a plot for the transfer of the crown to their elder brother, the Elector Palatine. That the Elector had been encouraged in such aspirations by earlier incidents was true.

Cromwell improved the fall of Bristol as he had improved Naseby. 'Faith and prayer,' he tells the Speaker, 'obtained this city for you. It is meet that God have all the praise. Presbyterians, independents, and all here have the same spirit of faith and prayer, the same presence and answer; they agree here, have no names of difference; pity it is it should be otherwise anywhere.' So he urges to the end of his despatch. Toleration is the only key-word. 'All that believe have the real unity, which is most glorious because inward and spiritual. As for unity in forms, commonly called uniformity, every Christian will study that. But *in things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason.* In other things God hath put the sword in the hands of the parliament for the terror of evildoers and the praise of them that do well.' These high refrains were not at

all to the taste of the presbyterian majority, and on at least one occasion they were for public purposes suppressed.

After Bristol Winchester fell. Then Cromwell set down before Basing House, which had plagued and defied the generals of the parliament for many long months since 1643. Its valorous defender was Lord Winchester, a catholic, a brave, pious, and devoted servant of the royal cause, indirectly known to the student of English poetry as husband of the young lady on whose death, fourteen years earlier, Milton and Ben Jonson had written verses of elegiac grief. 'Cromwell spent much time with God in prayer the night before the storm of Basing. He seldom fights without some text of scripture to support him.' This time he rested on the eighth verse of the One Hundred and Fifteenth Psalm: 'They that make them [idols] are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them,' —with private application to the theologies of the popish Lord Winchester. 'We stormed this morning,' Oliver reports (October 14, 1645), 'after six of the clock; the signal for falling on was the firing four of our cannon, which being done, our men fell on with great resolution and cheerfulness.' Many of the enemy were put to the sword; all the sumptuous things abounding in the proud house were plundered; 'popish books, with copes and such utensils,' were flung into the purifying flame, and before long fire and destruction had left only blackened ruins. Among the prisoners was Winchester himself. In those days the word in season was held to be an urgent duty.

Hugh Peters thought the moment happy for proving to his captive the error of his idolatrous ways, just as Cheynell hastened the end of Chillingworth by thrusting controversy upon his last hour, and as Clotworthy teased the unfortunate Laud, at the instant when he was laying his head upon the block, with questions upon what his assurance of salvation was founded. The stout-hearted cavalier of Basing, after long endurance of his pulpit tormentors, at last broke out and said that 'if the king had no more ground in England than Basing House, he would still adventure as he had done, and so maintain it to the uttermost.'

After Basing the king had indeed not very much more ground in England or anywhere else. This was the twentieth garrison that had been taken that summer. Fairfax, who had parted from Cromwell for a time after the fall of Bristol, pushed on into Devon and Cornwall, and by a series of rapid and vigorous operations cleared the royalist forces out of the west. He defeated Hopton, that good soldier and honourable man, first at Torrington and then at Truro, and his last achievement was the capture of Exeter (April 1646). Cromwell, who had joined him shortly after the fall of Basing House, was with the army throughout these operations, watching the state of affairs at Westminster from a distance, in a frame of mind shown by the exhortations in his despatches, and constant to his steadfast rule of attending with close diligence to the actual duties of the day, leaving other things to come after in their place. Upon the fall of

Exeter, he was despatched by Fairfax to report their doings to the parliament. He received the formal thanks of the House of Commons, as well as a more solid recognition of his fidelity and service in the shape of estates of the value of two thousand five hundred pounds a year. Then Cromwell went back to Fairfax and the investment of Oxford.

BOOK III.

(1646–49)

CHAPTER I.

THE KING A PRISONER.

One Sunday at midnight (April 26, 1646), the king at Oxford came secretly to an appointed room in one of the colleges, had his hair and beard cut short, was dressed in the disguise of a servant, and at three in the morning, with a couple of companions, crossed over Magdalen Bridge and passed out of the gate, leaving behind him for ever the gray walls and venerable towers, the churches and libraries, the cloisters and gardens, of the ever-faithful city. He had not even made up his mind whither to go, whether to London or to the Scots. Riding through Maidenhead and Slough, the party reached Uxbridge and Hillingdon, and there at last after long and perplexed debate he resolved to set his face northward, but with no clear or settled design. For eight days men wondered whether the fugitive king lay hidden in London or had gone to Ireland. Charles was afraid of London, and he hoped that the French envoy would assure him that the Scots were willing to grant him honourable conditions. Short of this,

he was inclined rather to cast himself upon the English than to trust his countrymen. His choice was probably the wrong one. If he had gone to London he would have had a better chance than ever came to him again, of widening the party divisions in the House of Commons, and he would have shown the English that he had that confidence in their loyalty which at this, as almost at every other stage, the general body of them were little likely to disappoint or to betray. After all, it mattered less where Charles was than what he was. If, in the language of the time, God had hardened him, if he was bent on 'tinkling on bishops and delinquents and such foolish toys,' he might as well try his shallow arts in one place as another. Do what he would, grim men and grim facts had now fast hold upon him. He found his way to Harrow, thence to St. Albans, and thence to Downham. There the disguised king stayed at a tavern until word came from Montereul—not very substantial, as it proved—that the Scots would give the assurances that he desired. Ten days after leaving Oxford Charles rode into the Scottish quarters at Southwell. He was never a free man again. Before the end of June, Oxford surrendered. The generals were blamed for the liberality of the terms of capitulation, but Cromwell insisted on their faithful observance, for he knew that the war was now at an end, and that in civil strife clemency must be the true policy.

With the close of the war and the surrender of the person of the king a new crisis began, not less

decisive than that which ended in the raising of the royal standard four years before, but rapidly opening more extensive ground of conflict and awakening more formidable elements. Since then Europe has learned, or has not learned, the lesson that revolutions are apt to follow a regular order. It would be a complete mistake, however, to think that England in 1647 was at all like France after the return of Bonaparte from his victorious campaigns in Italy. They were unlike, because Cromwell was not a bandit, and the army of the New Model was not a standing force of many tens of thousands of men, essentially conscienceless and only existing for war and conquest. The task was different. No situations in history really reproduce themselves. In France the fabric of government had been violently dashed to pieces from foundation to crest. Those ideas in men's minds by which national institutions are moulded, and from which they mainly draw their life, had become faded and powerless. The nation had no reverence for the throne, and no affection either for the king while he was alive, or for his memory after they had killed him. Not a single institution stood sacred. In England, in 1647, no such terrible catastrophe had happened. A confused storm had swept over the waters, many a brave man had been carried overboard, but the ship of state seemed to have ridden out the hurricane. The king had been beaten, but the nation never dreamed of anything but monarchy. The bishops had gone down, but the nation desired a national church. The lords

had dwindled to a dubious shadow, but the nation cherished its unalterable reverence for parliament.

The highest numbers in a division, even in the early days of the Long Parliament, do not seem to have gone above three hundred and eighty out of a total of near five hundred. After the war broke out they naturally sank to a far lower figure. At least a hundred members were absent in the discharge of local duties. A hundred more took the side of the king, and shook the dust of Westminster from off their feet. On the first Self-denying Ordinance one hundred and ninety members voted. The appointment of Fairfax to be commander-in-chief was carried by one hundred and one against sixty-nine. The ordinary working strength was not above a hundred. The weakness of moral authority in a House in this condition was painfully evident, but so too were the difficulties in the way of any remedy. A general dissolution, as if the country were in deep tranquillity instead of being torn and wearied by civil convulsion, was out of the question. Apart from the technical objection of calling a new parliament without the king and the king's great seal, the risk of throwing upon doubtful constituencies all the vital issues then open and unsettled was too formidable for any statesman in his senses to provoke.

The House proceeded gradually, and after Naseby issued writs in small batches. Before the end of 1646 about two hundred and thirty-five new members had been returned, and of these the majority either professed independency or leaned

towards it, or at least were averse to presbyterian exclusiveness, and not a few were officers in the army. Thus in all revolutions, as they move forward, stratum is superimposed above stratum. Coke, Selden, Eliot, Hampden, Pym, the first generation of constitutional reformers, were now succeeded by a fresh generation of various revolutionary shades—Ireton, Ludlow, Hutchinson, Algernon Sidney, Fleetwood, and Blake. Cromwell, from his success as commander, his proved experience, and his stern adherence to the great dividing doctrine of toleration, was the natural leader of this new and powerful group. Sidney's stoical death years after on Tower Hill, and Blake's destruction of the Spanish silver-galleons in the bay of Santa Cruz, the most splendid naval achievement of that age, have made a deeper mark on historic imagination, but for the purposes of the hour it was Ireton who had the more important part to play. Ireton, now five-and-thirty, was the son of a country gentleman in Nottinghamshire, had been bred at Oxford, and read law in the Temple. He had fought at Edgehill, had ridden by Cromwell's side at Gainsborough and Marston Moor, and, as we have seen, was in command of the horse on the left wing at Naseby, where his fortune was not good. No better brain was then at work on either side, no purer character. Some found that he had 'the principles and the temper of a Cassius in him,' for no better reason than that he was firm, never shrinking from the shadow of his convictions, active, discreet, and with a singular power of drawing others,

including first of all Cromwell himself, over to his own judgment. He had that directness, definiteness, and persistency to which the Pliables of the world often misapply the ill-favoured name of fanaticism. He was a man, says one, regardless of his own or any one's private interest wherever he thought the public service might be advantaged. He was very active, industrious, and stiff in his ways and purposes, says another; stout in the field, and wary and prudent in counsel; exceedingly forward as to the business of the Commonwealth. 'Cromwell had a great opinion of him, and no man could prevail so much, nor order him so far, as Ireton could.' He was so diligent in the public service, and so careless of all belonging to himself, that he never regarded what food he ate, what clothes he wore, what horse he mounted, or at what hour he went to rest. Cromwell good-naturedly implies in Ireton almost excessive fluency with his pen; he does not write to him, he says, because 'one line of mine begets many of his.' The framing of constitutions is a pursuit that has fallen into just discredit in later days, but the power of intellectual concentration and the constructive faculty displayed in Ireton's plans of constitutional revision, mark him as a man of the first order in that line. He was enough of a lawyer to comprehend with precision the principles and forms of government, but not too much of a lawyer to prize and practise new invention and resource. If a fresh constitution could have been made, Ireton was the man to make it. Not less remarkable than his grasp

and capacity of mind was his disinterestedness. When he was serving in Ireland, parliament ordered a settlement of two thousand pounds a year to be made upon him. The news was so unacceptable to him that when he heard of it, he said that they had many just debts they had better pay before making any such presents, and that for himself he had no need of their land and would have none of it. It was to this comrade in arms and counsel that Cromwell, a year after Naseby (1646), gave in marriage his daughter Bridget, then a girl of two-and-twenty.

The king's surrender to the Scots created new entanglements. The episode lasted from May 1646 to January 1647. It made worse the bad feeling that had for long been growing between the English and the Scots. The religious or political quarrel about uniform presbytery, charges of military uselessness, disputes about money, disputes about the border strongholds, all worked with the standing international jealousy to intensify a strain that had long been dangerous, and in another year in the play of Scottish factions against one another was to become more dangerous still.

Terms of a settlement had been propounded to the king in the Nineteen Propositions of York, on the eve of the war in 1642; in the treaty of Oxford at the beginning of 1643; in the treaty of Uxbridge in 1644-45, the failure of which led to the New Model and to Naseby. By the Nineteen Propositions now made to him at Newcastle the king was to swear to the

Covenant, and to make all his subjects do the same. Archbishops, bishops, and all other dignitaries were to be utterly abolished and taken away. The children of papists were to be educated by protestants in the protestant faith; and mass was not to be said either at court or anywhere else. Parliament was to control all the military forces of the kingdom for twenty years, and to raise money for them as it might think fit. An immense list of the king's bravest friends was to be proscribed. Little wonder is it that these proposals, some of them even now so odious, some so intolerable, seemed to Charles to strike the crown from his head as effectually as if it were the stroke of the axe.

Charles himself never cherished a more foolish dream than this of his Scottish custodians, that he would turn covenanter. Scottish covenanters and English puritans found themselves confronted by a conscience as rigid as their own. Before the summer was over the king's madness, as it seemed to them, had confounded all his presbyterian friends. They were in no frame of mind to apprehend even dimly the king's view of the divine right of bishops as the very foundation of the Anglican Church, and the one sacred link with the church universal. Yet they were themselves just as tenacious of the divine right of presbytery. Their independent enemies looked on with a stern satisfaction, that was slowly beginning to take a darker and more revengeful cast.

In spite of his asseverations, nobody believed that the king 'stuck upon episcopacy for any conscience.' Here, as time was to show, the world did Charles

much less than justice; but he did not conceal from the queen and others who urged him to swallow presbytery, that he had a political no less than a religious objection to it. 'The nature of presbyterian government is to steal or force the crown from the king's head, for their chief maxim is (and I know it to be true) that all kings must submit to Christ's kingdom, of which they are the sole governors, the king having but a single and no negative voice in their assemblies.' When Charles said he knew this to be true, he was thinking of all the bitter hours that his father had passed in conflict with the clergy. He had perhaps heard of the scene between James VI. and Andrew Melvill in 1596; how the preacher bore him down, calling the king God's silly vassal, and, taking him by the sleeve, told him that there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is Christ Jesus the King, and his kingdom the kirk, whose subject King James VI. is, and of whose kingdom not a king, not a lord, not a head, but a member. 'And they whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over his kirk and govern his spiritual kingdom, have sufficient power of him and authority so to do, the which no Christian, king nor prince, should control and discharge, but fortify and assist.'

The sincerity of his devotion to the church did not make Charles a plain-dealer. He agreed to what was proposed to him about Ireland, supposing, as he told Bellièvre, the French ambassador, that the ambiguous expression found in the terms in which it was drawn up would give him the means by and by of interpreting

it to his advantage. Charles, in one of his letters to the queen, lets us see what he means by an ambiguous expression. 'It is true,' he tells her, 'that it may be I give them leave to hope for more than I intended, but my words are only "*to endeavour* to give them satisfaction."' Then he is anxious to explain that though it is true that as to places he gives them some more likely hopes, 'yet neither in that is there any absolute engagement, but there is the condition "of giving me encouragement thereunto by their ready inclination to peace" annexed with it.'

It is little wonder that just as royalists took dissimulation to be the key to Cromwell, so it has been counted the master vice of Charles. Yet Charles was not the only dissembler. At this moment the Scots themselves boldly declared that all charges about their dealing with Mazarin and the queen were wholly false, when in fact they were perfectly true. In later days the Lord Protector dealt with Mazarin on the basis of toleration for catholics, but his promises were not to be publicly announced. Revolutions do not make the best soil for veracity. It would be hard to deny that before Charles great dissemblers had been wise and politic princes. His ancestor King Henry VII., his predecessor Queen Elizabeth of famous memory, his wife's father Henry IV. of France, Louis XI., Charles V., and many another sagacious figure in the history of European states, had freely and effectively adopted the maxims now commonly named after Machiavelli. In truth, the cause of the king's ruin lay as much in his position as in his character. The directing portion of

the nation had made up its mind to alter the relations of crown and parliament, and it was hardly possible in the nature of things,—men and kings being what they are,—that Charles should passively fall into the new position that his victorious enemies had made for him. Europe has seen many constitutional monarchies attempted or set up within the last hundred years. In how many cases has the new system been carried on without disturbing an old dynasty? We may say of Charles I. what has been said of Louis XVI. Every day they were asking the king for the impossible—to deny his ancestors, to respect the constitution that stripped him, to love the revolution that destroyed him. How could it be?

It is beside the mark, again, to lay the blame upon the absence of a higher intellectual atmosphere. It was not a bad intellectual basis that made the catastrophe certain, but antagonism of will, the clash of character, the violence of party passion and personality. The king was determined not to give up what the reformers were determined that he should not keep. He felt that to yield would be to betray both those who had gone before him, and his children who were to come after. His opponents felt that to fall back would be to go both body and soul into chains. So presbyterians and independents feared and hated each other, not merely because each failed in intellectual perception of the case of their foe, but because their blood was up, because they believed dissent in opinion to mean moral obliquity, because sectional interests were at stake, and for all those other

reasons which spring from that spirit of sect and party which is so innate in man, and always mingles so much evil with whatever it may have of good.

The undoing of Charles was not merely his turn for intrigue and double-dealing; it was blindness to signs, mismeasurement of forces, dishevelled confusion of means and ends. Unhappily mere foolishness in men responsible for the government of great states is apt to be a curse as heavy as the crimes of tyrants. With strange self-confidence, Charles was hard at work upon schemes and combinations, all at best most difficult in themselves, and each of them violently inconsistent with the other. He was hopefully negotiating with the independents, and at the same time both with the catholic Irish and with the presbyterian Scots. He looked to the support of the covenanters, and at the same time he relied upon Montrose, between whom and the covenanters there was now an antagonism almost as vindictive as a Corsican blood-feud. He professed a desire to come to an understanding with his people and parliament, yet he had a chimerical plan for collecting a new army to crush both parliament and people; and he was looking each day for the arrival of Frenchmen, or Lorrainers, or Dutchmen or Danes, and their march through Kent or Suffolk upon his capital. While negotiating with men to whom hatred of the Pope was the breath of their nostrils, he was allowing the queen to bargain for a hundred thousand crowns in one event, and a second hundred in another, from Antichrist himself. He must have known, moreover, that nearly every move in this

stealthy game was more or less well known to all those other players against whom he had so improvidently matched himself.

The queen's letters during all these long months of tribulation shed as much light upon the character of Charles as upon her own. Complaint of his lack of constancy and resolution is the everlasting refrain. Want of perseverance in his plans, she tells him, has been his ruin. When he talks of peace with the parliament she vows that she will go into a convent, for she will never trust herself with those who will then be his masters. 'If you change again, farewell for ever. If you have broken your resolution, nothing but death for me. As long as the parliament lasts you are no king for me; I will not put my foot in England.' We can have no better measure of Charles's weakness than that in the hour of adversity, so desperate for both of them, he should be thus addressed by a wife to whom he had been wedded for twenty years.

His submission is complete. He will not have a gentleman for his son's bedchamber, nor Montrose for his own bedchamber, without her consent. He will not decide whether it is best for him to make for Ireland, France, or Denmark, until he knows what she thinks best. 'If I quit my conscience,' he pleads, in the famous sentiment of Lovelace, 'how unworthy I make myself of thy love!' With that curious streak of immovable scruple so often found in men in whom equivocation is a habit of mind and practice, he had carefully kept his oath never to mention matters of religion to his catholic queen, and it is only under

stress of this new misconstruction that he seeks to put himself right with her, by explaining his position about apostolic succession, the divine right of bishops, and the absolute unlawfulness of presbyterianism, ever the ally and confederate of rebellion.

Nothing that he was able to do could disarm the universal anger and suspicion which the seizure of the king's papers at Naseby had begun, and the discovery of a copy of the Glamorgan treaty at Sligo (October 1645) had carried still deeper. The presbyterians in their discomfiture openly expressed their fears that the king was now undone for ever. Charles in a panic offered to hand over the management of Ireland to his parliament, thus lightly dropping the whole Irish policy on which he had for long been acting, flinging to the winds all his engagements, understandings, and promises to the Irish catholics, and handing them over without conditions to the tender mercies of enemies fiercely thirsting for a bloody retaliation. His recourse to foreign powers was well known. The despatch of the Prince of Wales to join his mother in France was felt to be the unsealing of 'a fountain of foreign war'; as the queen had got the prince into her hands, she could make the youth go to mass and marry the Duke of Orleans's daughter. Ten thousand men from Ireland were to overrun the Scottish lowlands, and then to raise the malignant north of England. The King of Denmark's son was to invade the north of Scotland with three or four thousand Dutch veterans. Eight or ten thousand French were to join the remnant of the royal army in Cornwall. Even the negotiations that had

been so long in progress at Münster, and were by and by to end the Thirty Years' War and consummate Richelieu's great policy in the treaties of Westphalia, were viewed with apprehension by the English reformers; for a peace might mean the release both of France and Spain for an attack upon England in these days of divine wrath and unsearchable judgments against the land. Prayer and fasting were never more diligently resorted to than now. The conflict of the two English parties lost none of its sharpness or intensity. The success of the policy of the independents, so remarkably shown at Naseby, pursued as it had been against common opinion at Westminster, became more commanding with every new disclosure of the king's designs. In the long and intricate negotiations with the king and with the Scots at Newcastle, independent aims had been justified and had prevailed. The baffled presbyterians only became the more embittered. At the end of January 1647, a new situation became defined. The Scots, unable to induce the king to make those concessions in religion without which not a Scot would take arms to help him, and having received an instalment of the pay that was due to them, marched away to their homes across the border. Commissioners from the English parliament took their place as custodians of the person of the king. By order of the two Houses, Holmby in the county of Northampton was assigned to him as his residence, and here he remained until the month of June, when once more the scene was violently transformed.

CHAPTER II.

THE CRISIS OF 1647.

If ever there was in the world a revolution with ideas as well as interests, with principle and not egotism for its mainspring, it was this. At the same time as England, France was torn by civil war, but the civil war of the Fronde was the conflict of narrow aristocratic interests with the newly consolidated supremacy of the monarch. It was not the forerunner of the French Revolution, with all its hopes and promises of a regenerated time; the Fronde was the expiring struggle of the belated survivors of the feudal age. The English struggle was very different. Never was a fierce party conflict so free of men who, in Dante's blighting phrase, 'were for themselves.' Yet much as there was in the puritan uprising to inspire and exalt, its ideas, when tested by the pressure of circumstance, showed themselves unsettled and vague; principles were slow to ripen, forces were indecisively distributed, its theology did not help. This was what Cromwell, henceforth the great practical mind of the movement, was now painfully to discover.

It was not until 1645 that Cromwell had begun to stand clearly out in the popular imagination, alike of

friends and foes. He was the idol of his troops. He prayed and preached among them; he played uncouth practical jokes with them; he was not above a snowball match against them; he was a brisk, energetic, skilful soldier, and he was an invincible commander. In parliament he made himself felt, as having the art of hitting the right debating-nail upon the head. The saints had an instinct that he was their man, and that they could trust him to stand by them when the day of trial came. A good commander of horse, say the experts, is as rare as a good commander-in-chief, he needs so rare a union of prudence with impetuosity. What Cromwell was in the field he was in council: bold, but wary; slow to raise his arm, but swift to strike; fiery in the assault, but knowing when to draw bridle. These rare combinations were invaluable, for even the heated and headlong revolutionary is not sorry to find a leader cooler than himself. Above all, and as the mainspring of all, he had heart and conscience. While the Scots are striving to make the king into a covenanter, and the parliament to get the Scots out of the country, and the independents to find means of turning the political scale against the presbyterians, Cromwell finds time to intercede with a royalist gentleman on behalf of some honest poor neighbours who are being molested for their theologies. To the same time (1646) belongs that well-known passage where he says to one of his daughters that her sister bewails her vanity and carnal mind, and seeks after what will satisfy: 'And thus to be a Seeker is to be of the best sect next to a Finder, and such an one shall

every faithful, humble seeker be at the end. Happy seeker, happy finder!'

In no contest in our history has the disposition of the pieces on the political chessboard been more perplexed. What Oliver perceived as he scanned each quarter of the political horizon was first a parliament in which the active leaders were presbyterians, confronted by an army, at once suspected and suspicious, whose active leaders were independent. The fervour of the preachers had been waxing hotter and still hotter, and the angry trumpet sounding a shriller blast. He saw the city of London, which had been the mainstay of the parliament in the war, now just as strenuous for a good peace. He saw an army in which he knew that his own authority stood high, but where events were soon to show that he did not yet know all the fierce undercurrents and dark and pent-up forces. Besides all this, he saw a king beaten in the field, but still unbending in defence of his religion, his crown, and his friends, and boldly confident that nothing could prevent him from still holding the scale between the two rival bands of his triumphant enemies. Outside this kingdom he saw the combative and dogged Scots, who had just been persuaded to return to their own country, still sharply watching English affairs over the border, and still capable of drawing the sword for king or for parliament, as best might suit the play of their own infuriated factions. Finally there was Ireland, distracted, dangerous, sullen, and a mainspring of difficulty and confusion, now used by the parliament in one way against the army, and now by the king in

another way against both army and parliament. The cause in short, whether Cromwell yet looked so far in front or not, was face to face with the gloomy alternatives of a perfidious restoration, or a new campaign and war at all hazards.

There is no other case in history where the victors in a great civil war were left so entirely without the power of making their own settlement, and the vanquished left so plainly umpires in their own quarrel. The beaten king was to have another chance, his best and his last. Even now if one could read old history like a tale of which we do not know the end, whether it should be that sentiment has drawn the reader's sympathies to the side of the king, or right reason drawn them to the side of the king's adversaries, it might quicken the pulse when a man comes to the exciting and intricate events of 1647, and sees his favourite cause, whichever it chances to be, trembling in the scale.

Clarendon says that though the presbyterians were just as malicious and as wicked as the independents, there was this great difference between them, that the independents always did what made for the end they had in view, while the presbyterians always did what was most sure to cross their own design and hinder their own aim. These are differences that in all ages mark the distinction between any strong political party and a weak one; between powerful leaders who get things done, and impotent leaders who are always waiting for something that never happens.

The pressure of the armed struggle with the king being withdrawn, party spirit in parliament revived in full vigour. The Houses were face to face with the dangerous task of disbanding the powerful force that had fought their battle and established their authority, and was fully conscious of the magnitude of its work. To undertake disbandment in England was indispensable; the nation was groaning under the burden of intolerable taxation, and the necessity of finding troops for service in Ireland was urgent. The city clamoured for disbandment, and that a good peace should be made with his Majesty. The party interest of the presbyterian majority, moreover, pointed in the same way; to break up the New Model, and dispose of as many of the soldiers as could be induced to re-enlist for the distant wilds of Ireland, would be to destroy the fortress of their independent rivals.

There is no evidence that Cromwell took any part in the various disbanding votes as they passed through the House of Commons in the early months of 1647, and he seems to have been slack in his attendance. No operation was ever conducted with worse judgment. Instead of meeting the men frankly, parliament chaffered, framed their act of indemnity too loosely, offered only eight weeks of pay though between forty and fifty weeks were overdue, and then, when the soldiers addressed them, suppressed their petitions or burned them by the hangman, and passed angry resolutions against their authors as enemies of the state and disturbers of the public peace. This

is the party of order all over. It is a curious circumstance that a proposal should actually have been made in parliament to arrest Cromwell for complicity in these proceedings of the army at the moment when some of the soldiers, on the other hand, blamed him for stopping and undermining their petitions, and began to think they had been in too great a hurry to give him their affections.

The army in their quarters at Saffron Walden grew more and more restive. They chose agents, entered into correspondence for concerted action, and framed new petitions. Three troopers, who brought a letter with these communications, addressed to Cromwell and two of the other generals in parliament, were summoned to the bar, and their stoutness so impressed or scared the House that Cromwell and Ireton, Fleetwood and the sturdy Skippon, were despatched to the army to feel the ground. They held a meeting in the church at Saffron Walden, with a couple of hundred officers and a number of private soldiers, and listened to their reports from the various regiments. Nothing was said either about religion or politics; arrears were the sore point, and if there were no better offer on that head, then no disbandment. The whole scene and its tone vividly recall the proceedings of a modern trade-union in the reasonable stages of a strike. In temper, habit of mind, plain sense, and even in words and form of speech, the English soldier of the New Model two centuries and a half ago must have been very much like the sober and respectable miner, ploughman, or

carter of to-day. But the violence of war had hardened their fibre, had made them rough under contradiction, and prepared them both for bold thoughts and bolder acts.

Meanwhile a thing of dark omen happened. At the beginning of May, while Cromwell was still at Saffron Walden, it was rumoured that certain foot-soldiers about Cambridgeshire had given out that they would go to Holmby to fetch the king. The story caused much offence and scandal, but it very soon came true. One summer evening small parties of horse were observed in the neighbourhood of Holmby. At daybreak Cornet Joyce made his way within the gates at the head of five hundred mounted troopers. Later in the day a report got abroad that the parliament would send a force to carry the king to London. Joyce and his party promptly made up their minds. At ten at night the cornet awoke the king from slumber, and respectfully requested him to move to other quarters next day. The king hesitated. At six in the morning the conversation was resumed. The king asked Joyce whether he was acting by the general's commission. Joyce said that he was not, and pointed as his authority to the five hundred men on their horses in the court-yard. 'As well-written a commission, and with as fine a frontispiece, as I have ever seen in my life,' pleasantly said Charles. The king had good reason for his cheerfulness. He was persuaded that the cornet could not act without the counsel of greater persons, and if so, this could only mean that the

military leaders were resolved on a breach with the parliament. From such a quarrel Charles might well believe that to him nothing but good could come.

Whether Cromwell was really concerned either in the king's removal, or in any other stage of this obscure transaction, remains an open question. What is not improbable is that Cromwell may have told Joyce to secure the king's person at Holmby against the suspected designs of the parliament, and that the actual removal was prompted on the spot by a supposed or real emergency. On the other hand, the hypothesis is hardly any more improbable that the whole design sprang from the agitators, and that Cromwell had no part in it. It was noticed later as a significant coincidence that on the very evening on which Joyce forced his way into the king's bedchamber, Cromwell, suspecting that the leaders of the presbyterian majority were about to arrest him, mounted his horse and rode off to join the army. His share in Joyce's seizure and removal of the king afterwards is less important than his approval of it as a strong and necessary lesson to the majority in the parliament.

So opened a more startling phase of revolutionary transformation. For Joyce's exploit at Holmby begins the descent down those fated steeps in which each successive violence adds new momentum to the violence that is to follow, and pays retribution for the violence that has gone before. Purges, proscriptions, camp courts, executions, major-generals, dictatorship, restoration — this was the toilsome,

baffling path on to which, in spite of hopeful auguries and prognostications, both sides were now irrevocably drawn.

Parliament was at length really awake to the power of the soldiers, and their determination to use it. The city, with firmer nerve but still with lively alarm, watched headquarters rapidly changed to St. Albans, to Berkhamsted, to Uxbridge, to Wycombe—now drawing off, then hovering closer, launching to-day a declaration, to-morrow a remonstrance, next day a vindication, like dangerous flashes out of a sullen cloud.

For the first time 'purge' took its place in the political vocabulary of the day. Just as the king had attacked the five members, so now the army attacked eleven, and demanded the ejection of the whole group of presbyterian leaders from the House of Commons, with Denzil Holles at the head of them (June 16-26). Among the Eleven were men as pure and as patriotic as the immortal Five, and when we think that the end of these heroic twenty years was the Restoration, it is not easy to see why we should denounce the pedantry of the parliament, whose ideas for good or ill at last prevailed, and should reserve all our glorification for the army, who proved to have no ideas that would either work or that the country would accept. The demand for the expulsion of the Eleven was the first step in the path that was to end in the removal of the Bauble in 1653.

Incensed by these demands, and by what they took to be the weakness of their confederates in the

Commons, the city addressed one strong petition after another, and petitions were speedily followed by actual revolt. The seamen and the watermen on the riverside, the young men and apprentices from Aldersgate and Cheapside, entered into one of the many solemn engagements of these distracted years, and when their engagement was declared by the bewildered Commons to be dangerous, insolent, and treasonable, excited mobs trooped down to Westminster, made short work of the nine gentlemen who that day composed the House of Lords, forcing them to cross the obnoxious declaration off their journals, and tumultuously besieged the House of Commons, some of them even rudely making their way, as Charles had done six years before, within the sacred doors and on to the inviolable floor, until members drew their swords and forced the intruders out. When the Speaker would have left the House, the mob returned to the charge, drove him back to his chair, and compelled him to put the motion that the king be invited to come to London forthwith with honour, freedom, and safety. So readily, as usual, did reaction borrow at second hand the turbulent ways of revolution.

In disgust at this violent outrage, the Speakers of the two Houses (July 30), along with a considerable body of members, betook themselves to the army. When they accompanied Fairfax and his officers on horseback in a review on Hounslow Heath, the troopers greeted them with mighty acclamations of 'Lords and Commons and a free parliament.' The

effect of the manœuvres of the reactionists in the city was to place the army in the very position that they were eager to take, of being protectors of what they chose to consider the true parliament, to make a movement upon London not only defensible, but inevitable, to force the hand of Cromwell, and to inflame still higher the ardour of the advocates of the revolutionary Thorough. Of the three great acts of military force against the parliament, now happened the first (August 1647). The doors were not roughly closed as Oliver closed them on the historic day in April 1653, and there was no sweeping purge like that of Pride in December 1648. Fairfax afterward sought credit for having now resisted the demand to put military violence upon the House, but Cromwell with his assent took a course that came to the same thing. He stationed cavalry in Hyde Park, and then marched down to his place in the House, accompanied by soldiers, who after he had gone in hung about the various approaches with a significance that nobody mistook. The soldiers had definitely turned politicians, and even without the experience that Europe has passed through since, it ought not to have been very hard to foresee what their politics would be.

CHAPTER III.

THE OFFICERS AS POLITICIANS.

ENGLAND throughout showed herself the least revolutionary of the three kingdoms, hardly revolutionary at all. Here was little of the rugged, dour, and unyielding persistency of the northern Covenanters, none of the savage aboriginal frenzy of the Irish. Cromwell was an Englishman all over, and it is easy to conceive the dismay with which in the first half of 1647 he slowly realised the existence of a fierce insurgent leaven in the army. The worst misfortune of a civil war, said Cromwell's contemporary, De Retz, is that one becomes answerable even for the mischief that one has not done. 'All the fools turn madmen, and even the wisest have no chance of either acting or speaking as if they were in their right wits.' In spite of the fine things that have been said of heroes, and the might of their will, a statesman in such a case as Cromwell's soon finds how little he can do to create marked situations, and how the main part of his business is in slowly parrying, turning, managing circumstances for which he is not any more responsible than he is for his own existence, and yet which are his

masters, and of which he can only make the best or the worst.

Cromwell never showed a more sagacious insight into the hard necessities of the situation than when he endeavoured to form an alliance between the king and the army. All the failures and disasters that harassed him from this until the day of his death arose from the breakdown of the negotiations now undertaken. The restoration of Charles I. by Cromwell would have been a very different thing from the restoration of Charles II. by Monk. In the midsummer of 1647 Cromwell declared that he desired no alteration of the civil government, and no meddling with the presbyterian settlement, and no opening of a way for 'licentious liberty under pretence of obtaining ease for tender consciences.'

Unhappily for any prosperous issue, Cromwell and his men were met by a constancy as fervid as their own. Charles followed slippery and crooked paths; but he was as sure as Cromwell that he had God on his side, that he was serving divine purposes and upholding things divinely instituted. He was as unyielding as Cromwell in fidelity to what he accounted the standards of personal duty and national well-being. He was as patient as Cromwell in facing the ceaseless buffets and misadventures that were at last to sweep him down the cataract. Charles was not without excuse for supposing that by playing off army against parliament, and independent against presbyterian, he would still come into his own again. The jealousy and ill-will between the contending parties was at its

height, and there was no reason either in conscience or in policy why he should not make the most of that fact. Each side sought to use him, and from his own point of view he had a right to strike the best bargain he could with either. Unfortunately, he could not bring himself to strike any bargain at all, and the chance passed. Cromwell's efforts only served to weaken his own authority with the army, and he was driven to give up hopes of the king, as he had already been driven to give up hopes of the parliament. This was in effect to be thrown back against all his wishes and instincts upon the army alone, and to find himself, by nature a moderator with a passion for order in its largest meaning, flung into the midst of military and constitutional anarchy.

Carlyle is misleading when, in deprecating a comparison between French Jacobins and English sectaries, he says that, apart from difference in situation, 'there is the difference between the believers in Jesus Christ and believers in Jean Jacques, which is still more considerable.' It would be nearer the mark to say that the sectaries were beforehand with Jean Jacques, and that half the troubles that confronted Cromwell and his men sprang from the fact that English sectaries were now saying to one another something very like what Frenchmen said in Rousseau's dialect a hundred and forty years later. 'No man who knows right,' says Milton, 'can be so stupid as to deny that *all men were naturally born free.*' In the famous document drawn up in the army in the autumn of 1647, and known (along with two other documents

under the same designation propounded in 1648-49) as the Agreement of the People, the sovereignty of the people through their representatives; the foundation of society in common right, liberty, and safety; the freedom of every man in the faith of his religion; and all the rest of the catalogue of the rights of man, are all set forth as clearly as they ever were by Robespierre or by Jefferson. In truth the phrase may differ, and the sanctions and the temper may differ; and yet in the thought of liberty, equality, and fraternity, in the dream of natural rights, in the rainbow vision of an inalienable claim to be left free in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, there is something that has for centuries from age to age evoked spontaneous thrills in the hearts of toiling, suffering, hopeful men—something that they need no philosophic book to teach them.

When Baxter came among the soldiers after Naseby, he found them breathing the spirit of conquerors. The whole atmosphere was changed. They now took the king for a tyrant and an enemy, and wondered only whether, if they might fight against him, they might not also kill or crush him—in itself no unwarrantable inference. He heard them crying out, 'What were the lords of England but William the Conqueror's colonels, or the barons but his majors, or the knights but his captains?' From this pregnant conclusions followed. Logic had begun its work, and in men of a certain temperament political logic is apt to turn into a strange poison. They will not rest until they have drained first principles to their very

dregs. They argue down from the necessities of abstract reasoning until they have ruined all the favouring possibilities of concrete circumstance.

We have at this time to distinguish political councils from military. There was almost from the first a standing council of war, exclusively composed of officers of higher rank. This body was not concerned in politics. The general council of the army, which was first founded during the summer of 1647, was a mixture of officers and the agents of the private soldiers. It contained certain of the generals, and four representatives from each regiment, two of them officers and two of them soldiers chosen by the men. This important assembly, with its two combined branches, did not last in that shape for more than a few months. After the execution of the king, the agitators, or direct representatives of the men, dropped off or were shut out, and what remained was a council of officers. They retained their power until the end; it was with them that Cromwell had to deal. The politics of the army became the governing element of the situation; it was here that those new forces were being evolved which, when the Long Parliament first met, nobody intended or foresaw, and that gave to the Rebellion a direction that led Cromwell into strange latitudes.

Happy chance has preserved, and the industry of a singularly clear-headed and devoted student has rescued and explored, vivid and invaluable pictures of the half-chaotic scene. At Saffron Walden, in May (1647), Cromwell urged the officers to strengthen

the deference of their men for the authority of parliament, for if once that authority were to fail, confusion must follow. At Reading, in July, the position had shifted, the temperature had risen, parliament in confederacy with the City had become the enemy, though there was still a strong group at Westminster who were the soldiers' friends. Cromwell could no longer proclaim the authority of parliament as the paramount object, for he knew this to be a broken reed. But he changed ground as little as he could and as slowly as he could.

Here we first get a clear sight of the temper of Cromwell as a statesman grappling at the same moment with presbyterians in parliament, with extremists in the army, with the king in the closet. It was a task for a hero. In manner he was always what Clarendon calls rough and brisk. He declared that he and his colleagues were as swift as anybody else in their feelings and desires; nay, more, 'Truly, I am very often judged as one that goes too fast that way,' and it is the peculiarity of men like me, he says, to think dangers more imaginary than real, 'to be always making haste, and more sometimes perhaps than good speed.' This is one of the too few instructive glimpses that we have of the real Oliver. Unity was first. Let no man exercise his parts to strain things, and to open up long disputes or needless contradictions, or to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction. They might be in the right or we might be in the right, but if they were to divide, then were they both in the wrong. On the merits

of the particular question of the moment, it was idle to tell him that their friends in London would like to see them march up. ''Tis the general good of the kingdom that we ought to consult. *That's the question, what's for their good, not what pleases them.*' They might be driven to march on to London, he told them, but an understanding was the most desirable way, and the other a way of necessity, and not to be done but in a way of necessity. What was obtained by an understanding would be firm and durable. *Things obtained by force, though never so good in themselves, would be both less to their honour and less likely to last.* 'Really, really, have what you will have; that you have by force, I look upon as nothing.' 'I could wish,' he said earlier, 'that we might remember this always, that *what we gain in a free way, it is better than twice as much in a forced, and will be more truly ours and our posterity's.*' It is one of the harshest ironies of history that the name of this famous man, who started on the severest stage of his journey with this broad and far-reaching principle, should have become the favourite symbol of the shallow faith that force is the only remedy.

The general council of the army at Putney in October and November (1647) became a constituent assembly. In June Ireton had drawn up for them a declaration of their wishes as to the 'settling of our own and the king's own rights, freedom, peace, and safety.' This was the first sign of using military association for political ends. We are not a mere mercenary army, they said, but are called forth in

defence of our own and the people's just rights and liberties. We took up arms in judgment and conscience to those ends, against all arbitrary power, violence, and oppression, and against all particular parties or interests whatsoever. These ideas were ripened by Ireton into the memorable Heads of the Proposals of the Army, a document that in days to come made its influence felt in the schemes of government during the Commonwealth and Protectorate.

In these discussions in the autumn of 1647, just as the Levellers anticipate Rousseau, so do Oliver and Ireton recall Burke. After all, these are only the two eternal voices in revolutions, the standing antagonisms through history between the natural man and social order. In October the mutinous section of the army presented to the council a couple of documents, the Case of the Army Stated and an Agreement of the People—a title that was also given, as I have said, to a document of Lilburne's at the end of 1648, and to one of Ireton's at the beginning of 1649. Here they set down the military grievances of the army in the first place, and in the second they set out the details of a plan of government resting upon the supreme authority of a House of Commons chosen by universal suffrage, and in spirit and in detail essentially republican. This was the strange and formidable phantom that now rose up before men who had set out on their voyage with Pym and Hampden. If we think that the headsman at Whitehall is now little more than a year off, what followed is just as startling. Ireton at once declared that he

did not seek, and would not act with those who sought, the destruction either of parliament or king. Cromwell, taking the same line, was more guarded and persuasive. The pretensions and the expressions in your constitutions, he said, are very plausible, and if we could jump clean out of one sort of government into another, it is just possible there would not have been much dispute. But is this jump so easy? 'How do we know that other people may not put together a constitution as plausible as yours? . . . Even if this were the only plan proposed, you must consider not only its consequences, but the ways and means of accomplishing it. According to reason and judgment, are the spirits and temper of the people of this nation prepared to receive and to go along with it?' If he could see likelihood of visible popular support he would be satisfied, for, adds Oliver, in a sentence that might have come straight out of Burke, 'In the government of nations, that which is to be looked after is the affections of the people.'

Oliver said something about their being bound by certain engagements and obligations to which previous declarations had committed them with the public. 'It may be true enough,' cried Wildman, one of the ultras, 'that God protects men in keeping honest promises, but every promise must be considered afterward, when you are pressed to keep it, whether it was honest or just, or not. If it be not a just engagement, then it is a plain act of honesty for the man who has made it to recede from his former judgment and to abhor it.' This slippery sophistry,

so much in the vein of King Charles himself, brought Ireton swiftly to his feet with a clean and rapid debating point. 'You tell us,' he said, 'that an engagement is only binding so far as you think it honest; yet the pith of your case against the parliament is that in ten points it has violated engagements.'

In a great heat Rainborough, likewise an ultra, followed. You talk of the danger of divisions, but if things are honest, why should they divide us? You talk of difficulties, but if difficulties be all, how was it that we ever began the war, or dared to look an enemy in the face? You talk of innovation upon the old laws which made us a kingdom from old time. 'But if writings be true, there hath been many scufflings between the honest men of England and those that have tyrannized over them; and if people find that old laws do not suit freemen as they are, what reason can exist why old laws should not be changed to new?'

According to the wont of debate, Rainborough's heat kindled Cromwell. His stroke is not as clean as Ireton's, but there is in his words a glow of the sort that goes deeper than the sharpest dialectic. After a rather cumbrous effort to state the general case for opportunism, he closes in the manner of a famous word of Danton's, with a passionate declaration against divisions: 'Rather than I would have this kingdom break in pieces before some company of men be united together to a settlement, I will withdraw myself from the army to-morrow and lay down my commission; I will perish before I hinder it.'

Colonel Goffe then proposed that there should be a public prayer-meeting, and it was agreed that the morning of the next day should be given to prayer, and the afternoon to business. The lull, edifying as it was, did not last. No storms are ever harder to allay than those that spring up in abstract discussions. Wildman returned to the charge with law of nature, and the paramount claim of the people's rights and liberties over all engagements and over all authority. Hereupon Ireton flamed out just as Burke might have flamed out: 'There is venom and poison in all this. I know of no other foundation of right and justice but that we should keep covenant with one another. Covenants freely entered into must be kept. Take that away, and what right has a man to anything—to his estate of lands or to his goods? You talk of law of nature! By the law of nature you have no more right to this land or anything else than I have.'

Here the shrewd man that is a figure in all public meetings ancient and modern, who has no relish for general argument, broke in with the apt remark that if they went on no quicker with their business, the king would come and say who should be hanged first. Ireton, however, always was a man of the last word, and he stood to his point with acuteness and fluency, but too much in the vein styled academic. He turns to the question that was to give so much fuel to controversy for a hundred years to come—what obedience men owe to constituted authority. Cromwell's conclusion marked his usual urgency for unity,

but he stated it with an uncompromising breadth that is both new and extremely striking. For his part, he was anxious that nobody should suppose he and his friends were wedded and glued to forms of government. He wished them to understand that he was not committed to any principle of legislative power outside the Commons of the kingdom, or to any other doctrine than that the foundation and supremacy is in the people. With that vain cry so often heard through history from Pericles downwards, from the political leader to the roaring winds and waves of party passion, he appeals to them not to meet as two contrary parties, but as men desirous to satisfy each other. This is the clue to Cromwell. Only unity could save them from the tremendous forces ranged against them all; division must destroy them. Rather than imperil unity, he would go over with the whole of his strength to the extreme men in his camp, even though he might not think their way the best. The army was the one thing now left standing. The church was shattered. Parliament was paralysed. Against the king Cromwell had now written in his heart the judgment written of old on the wall against Belshazzar. If the army broke, then no anchor would hold, and once and for all the cause was lost.

The next day the prayer-meeting had cleared the air. After some civil words between Cromwell and Rainborough, Ireton made them another eloquent speech, where, among many other things, he lays bare the spiritual basis on which powerful and upright men

like Cromwell rested practical policy. Some may now be shocked, as were many at that day, by the assumption that little transient events are the true measure of the divine purpose. Others may feel the full force of all the standing arguments ever since Lucretius, that the nature of the higher powers is too far above mortal things to be either pleased or angry with us.[1] History is only intelligible if we place ourselves at the point of view of the actor who makes it. Ireton moving clean away from the position that he had taken up the day before, as if Oliver had wrestled with him in the intervening night, now goes on: 'It is not to me so much as the vainest or slightest thing you can imagine, whether there be a king in England or no, or whether there be lords in England or no. For whatever I find the work of God tending to, I should quietly submit to it. If God saw it good to destroy not only kings and lords, but all distinctions of degrees—nay, if it go further, to destroy all property—if I see the hand of God in it, I hope I shall with quietness acquiesce and submit to it and not resist it.' In other words, do but persuade him that Heaven is with the Levellers, and he turns Leveller himself. Ireton was an able and whole-hearted man, but we can see how his doctrine might offer a decorous mask to the hypocrite and the waiter upon Providence.

Colonel Goffe told them that he had been kept awake a long while in the night by certain thoughts, and he felt a weight upon his spirit until he had imparted them. They turned much upon Antichrist,

[1] 'Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira,' ii. 651.

and upon the passage in the Book of Revelation which describes how the kings of the earth have given up their powers to the Beast, as in sooth the kings of the earth have given up their powers to the Pope. Nobody followed Goffe into these high concerns, but they speedily set to work upon the carnal questions, so familiar to ourselves, of electoral franchise and re-distribution of seats—and these two, for that matter, have sometimes hidden a mystery of iniquity of their own.

'Is the meaning of your proposal,' said Ireton, 'that every man is to have an equal voice in the election of representors?' 'Yes,' replied Rainborough; 'the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as much as the greatest he, and a man is not bound to a government that he has not had a voice to put himself under.' Then the lawyer rose up in Ireton. 'So you stand,' he says, 'not on civil right but on natural right, and, for my part, I think that no right at all. Nobody has a right to a share in disposing the affairs of this kingdom unless he has a permanent fixed interest in the kingdom.' 'But I find nothing in the law of God,' Rainborough retorts, 'that a lord shall choose twenty burgesses, and a gentleman only two, and a poor man none. Why did Almighty God give men reason, if they should not use it in a voting way unless they have an estate of forty shillings a year?' 'But then,' says Ireton, 'if you are on natural right, show me what difference lies between a right to vote and a right to subsistence.' 'Every man is naturally free,' cries one. 'How comes it,' cries another, 'that one free-born

Englishman has property and his neighbour has none? Why has not a younger son as much right in the inheritance as the eldest?' So the modern reader finds himself in the thick of controversies that have shaken the world from that far-off day to this.

In such a crisis as that upon which England was now entering, it is not the sounder reasoning that decides; it is passions, interests, outside events, and that something vague, undefined, curious almost to mystery, that in bodies of men is called political instinct. All these things together seemed to sweep Cromwell and Ireton off their feet. The Levellers beat them, as Cromwell would assuredly have foreseen must happen, if he had enjoyed modern experiences of the law of revolutionary storms. Manhood suffrage was carried, though Cromwell had been against it as 'tending very much to anarchy,' and though Ireton had pressed to the uttermost the necessity of limiting the vote to men with fixed interests. Cromwell now said that he was not glued to any particular form of government. Only a fortnight before he had told the House of Commons that it was matter of urgency to restore the authority of monarchy, and Ireton had told the council of the army that there must be king and lords in any scheme that would do for him. In July Cromwell had called out that the question is, what is good for the people, not what pleases them. Now he raises the balancing consideration that if you do not build the fabric of government on consent it will not stand. Therefore you must think of what pleases people, or else they will not endure what is good for them. 'If I could

see a visible presence of the people, either by subscription or by numbers, that would satisfy me.' Cromwell now (November) says that if they were free to do as they pleased they would set up neither king nor lords. Further, they would not keep either king or lords, if to do so were a danger to the public interest. Was it a danger? Some thought so, others thought not. For his own part, he concurred with those who believed that there could be no safety with a king and lords, and even concurred with them in thinking that God would probably destroy them; yet 'God can do it without necessitating us to a thing which is scandalous, and therefore let those that are of that mind wait upon God for such a way where the thing may be done without sin and without scandal too.'

This was undoubtedly a remarkable change of Oliver's mind, and the balanced, hesitating phrases in which it is expressed hardly seem to fit a conclusion so momentous. A man who, even with profound sincerity, sets out shifting conclusions of policy in the language of unction, must take the consequences, including the chance of being suspected of duplicity by embittered adversaries. These weeks must have been to Oliver the most poignant hours of the whole struggle, and more than ever he must have felt the looming hazards of his own maxim that 'in yielding there is wisdom.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE KING'S FLIGHT.

THE strain of things had now become too intense to continue. On the evening of the day when Harrison was declaiming against the man of blood (November 11), the king disappeared from Hampton Court. That his life was in peril from some of the more violent of the soldiers at Putney half a dozen miles away, there can be no doubt, though circumstantial stories of plots for his assassination do not seem to be proved. Cromwell wrote to Whalley, who had the king under his guard, that rumours were abroad of an attempt upon the king's life, and if any such thing should be done it would be accounted a most horrid act. The story that Cromwell cunningly frightened Charles away, in order to make his own manœuvres run smoother, was long a popular belief, but all the probabilities are decisively against it. Even at that eleventh hour, as we see from his language a few days before the king's flight, Cromwell had no faith that a settlement was possible without the king, little as he could have hoped from any settlement made with him. Whither could it have been for Cromwell's interest that the king should betake

himself? Not to London, where a royalist tide was flowing pretty strongly. Still less toward the Scottish border, where Charles would begin a new civil war in a position most favourable to himself. Flight to France was the only move on the king's part that might have mended Cromwell's situation. He could have done no more effective mischief from France than the queen had done; on the other hand, his flight would have been treated as an abdication, with as convenient results as followed one-and-forty years later from the flight of James II.

We now know that Charles fled from Hampton Court because he had been told by the Scottish envoys, with whom he was then secretly dealing, as well as from other quarters, that his life was in danger, but without any more fixed designs than when he had fled from Oxford in April of the previous year. He seems to have arranged to take ship from Southampton Water, but the vessel never came, and he sought refuge in Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight (November 14, 1647). Here he was soon no less a prisoner than he had been at Hampton. As strongly as ever he even now felt that he held winning cards in his hands. 'Sir,' he had said to Fairfax, 'I have as good an interest in the army as you.' Nothing had happened since then to shake this conviction, and undoubtedly there was in the army, as there was in parliament, in the city, and all other considerable aggregates of the population, a lively and definite hope that royal authority would be restored. Beyond all this, Charles confidently anticipated that he could

rely upon the military force of the counter-revolution in Scotland.

Cromwell knew all these favouring chances as vividly as the king himself, and he knew better than Charles the terrible perils of jealousy and dissension in the only force upon which the cause could rely. 'For many months,' says Fairfax, 'all public councils were turned into private juntos, which begot greater emulations and jealousies among them.' Cromwell was the object of attack from many sides. He was accused of boldly avowing such noxious principles as these: that every single man is judge of what is just and right as to the good and ill of a kingdom; that the interest of the kingdom is the interest of the honest men in it, and those only are honest men who go with him; that it is lawful to pass through any forms of government for the accomplishment of his ends; that it is lawful to play the knave with a knave. This about the knave was only Cromwell's blunt way of putting the scriptural admonition to be wise as serpents, or Bacon's saying that the wise man must use the good and guard himself against the wicked. He was surrounded by danger. He knew that he was himself in danger of impeachment, and he had heard for the first time of one of those designs for his own assassination, of which he was to know so much more in days to come. He had been for five years at too close quarters with death in many dire shapes, to quail at the thought of it any more than King Charles quailed.

Cromwell in later days described 1648 as the most memorable year that the nation ever saw. 'So many

insurrections, invasions, secret designs, open and public attempts, all quashed, in so short a time, and this by the very signal appearance of God himself.' The first effect, he says, was to prepare for bringing offenders to punishment and for a change of government; but the great thing was 'the climax of the treaty with the king, whereby they would have put into his hands all that we had engaged for, and all our security should have been a little piece of paper.' Dangers both seen and unseen rapidly thickened. The king, while refusing his assent to a new set of propositions tendered to him by the parliament, had secretly entered into an engagement with commissioners from the Scots (December 26, 1647). Here we have one of the cardinal incidents of the struggle, like the case of the Five Members, or the closing of the negotiations with Cromwell. By this sinister instrument, the Scots, declaring against the unjust proceedings of the English Houses, were to send an army into England for the preservation and establishment of religion, and the restoration of all the rights and revenues of the crown. In return the king was to guarantee presbytery in England for three years, with liberty to himself to use his own form of divine service; but the opinions and practices of the independents were to be suppressed. That is, presbyterian Scot and English royalist were to join in arms against the parliament, on the basis of the restoration of the king's claims, the suppression of sectaries, and the establishment of presbytery for three years and no longer, unless the king should agree to an extension of the time. This clandestine covenant for

kindling afresh the flames of civil war was wrapped up in lead, and buried in the garden at Carisbrooke.

The secret must have been speedily guessed. Little more than a week after the treaty had been signed, a proposal was made in the Commons to impeach the king, and Cromwell supported it (not necessarily intending more than deposition) on the ground that the king, 'while he professed with all solemnity that he referred himself wholly to the parliament, had at the same time secret treaties with the Scots commissioners how he might embroil the nation in a new war and destroy the parliament.' Impeachment was dropped, but a motion was carried against holding further communications with the king (January 1648), thus in substance and for the time openly bringing monarchy to an end. From the end of 1647, and all through 1648, designs for bringing the king to justice which had long existed among a few of the extreme agitators, extended to the leading officers. The Committee of Both Kingdoms, in which Scots and English had united for executive purposes, was at once dissolved, and the new executive body, now exclusively English, found itself confronted by Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, all in active hostility, and by an England smouldering in various uncertain stages of disaffection. A portion of the fleet was already in revolt, and no one knew how far the mutiny might go. All must depend upon the army, and for the presbyterian party the success of the army would be the victory of a master and an enemy.

At the moment of the flight to Carisbrooke, Cromwell

had sternly stamped out an incipient revolt. At a rendezvous near Ware two regiments appeared on the field without leave, and bearing disorderly ensigns in their hats. Cromwell rode among them, bade them remove the mutinous symbol, arrested the ringleaders of those who refused to obey, and after a drum-head court-martial at which three of the offenders were condemned to death, ordered the three to throw dice for their lives, and he who lost was instantly shot (November 15, 1647). Though not more formidable than a breakdown of military discipline must have proved, the political difficulties were much less simple to deal with. Cromwell had definitely given up all hope of coming to terms with the king. On the other hand he was never a republican himself, and his sagacity told him that the country would never accept a government founded on what to him were republican chimeras. Every moment the tide of reaction was rising. From Christmas (1647) and all through the spring there were unmistakable signs of popular discontent. Puritan suppression of old merrymakings was growing too hard to bear, for the old Adam was not yet driven out of the free-born Englishman by either law or gospel. None of the sections into which opinion was divided had confidence in the parliament. The rumours of bringing the king to trial and founding a military republic perturbed many and incensed most in every class. Violent riots broke out in the city. In the home counties disorderly crowds shouted for God and King Charles. Royalist risings were planned in half the counties in England, north,

west, south, and even east. The royalist press was active and audacious. In South Wales the royal standard had been unfurled, the population eagerly rallied to it, and the strong places were in royalist hands. In Scotland Hamilton had got the best of Argyle and the covenanting ultras, in spite of the bitter and tenacious resistance of the clergy to every design for supporting a sovereign who was champion of episcopacy; and in April the parliament at Edinburgh had ordered an army to be raised to defend the king and the covenant. In face of public difficulties so overwhelming, Cromwell was personally weakened by the deep discredit into which he had fallen among the zealots in his own camp, as the result of his barren attempt to bring the king to reason. Of all the dark moments of his life this was perhaps the darkest.

He tried a sociable conference between the two ecclesiastical factions, including laymen and ministers of each, but each went away as stiff and as high as they had come. Then he tried a conference between the leading men of the army and the extreme men of the Commonwealth, and they had a fruitless argument on the hoary theme, dating almost from the birth of the western world, of the relative merits of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Cromwell wisely declined to answer this threadbare riddle, only maintaining that any form of government might be good in itself or for us, 'according as Providence should direct us' —the formula of mystic days for modern opportunism. The others replied by passages from the first book of Samuel, from Kings, and Judges. We cannot wonder

that Cromwell, thinking of the ruin he saw hanging imminent in thunder-clouds over cause and kingdom, at last impatiently ended the idle talk by flinging a cushion at Ludlow's head and running off down the stairs.

What is called the second civil war was now inevitable. The curtain was rising for the last, most dubious, most exciting, and most memorable act of the long drama in which Charles had played his leading and ill-starred part. Even in the army men were 'in a low, weak, divided, perplexed condition.' Some were so depressed by the refusal of the nation to follow their intentions for its good, that they even thought of laying down their arms and returning to private life. Thus distracted and cast down, their deep mystic faith drew them to the oracles of prayer, and at Windsor in April they began their solemn office, searching out what iniquities of theirs had provoked the Lord of Hosts to bring down such grievous perplexities upon them. Cromwell was among the most fervid, and again and again they all melted in bitter tears. Their sin was borne home to them. They had turned aside from the path of simplicity, and stepped, to their hurt, into the paths of policy. The root of the evil was found out in those cursed carnal conferences with the king and his party, to which their own conceited wisdom and want of faith had prompted them the year before. And so, after the meeting had lasted for three whole days, with prayer, exhortations, preaching, seeking, groans, and weeping, they came without a dissenting voice to

an agreement that it was the duty of the day to go out and fight against those potent enemies rising on every hand against them, and then it would be their further duty, if ever the Lord should bring them back in peace, to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for all the blood he had shed, and all the mischief he had done against the Lord's cause and people in these poor nations. When this vehement hour of exaltation had passed away, many of the warlike saints, we may be sure, including Oliver himself, admitted back into their minds some of those politic misgivings for which they had just shown such passionate contrition. But to the great majority it was the inspiration of the Windsor meetings, and the directness and simplicity of their conclusion, that gave such fiery energy to the approaching campaign, and kept alive the fierce resolve to exact retribution to the uttermost when the time appointed should bring the arch-delinquent within their grasp.

CHAPTER V.

SECOND CIVIL WAR—CROMWELL IN LANCASHIRE.

Even as the hour of doom drew steadily nearer, the prisoner at Carisbrooke might well believe that the rebels and traitors were hastening to their ruin. The political paradox grew more desperate as the days went on, and to a paradox Charles looked for his deliverance. It is worth examining. The parliamentary majority hoped for the establishment of presbytery and the restoration of the king, and so did the Scottish invaders. Yet the English presbyterians were forced into hostility to the invaders, though both were declared covenanters, because Scottish victory would mean the defeat of the parliament. The Scottish presbyterians were hostile or doubtful, because they found their army in incongruous alliance with English cavaliers. The Scots under Hamilton were to fight for the covenant; their English confederates, under Langdale, were openly fighting for the antagonistic cause of church and king, and refused point-blank to touch the covenant. If the Scotch invaders should win, they would win with the aid of purely royalist support in the field, and purely royalist sympathy in the

nation. The day on which they should enter London would be the day of unqualified triumph for the king, of humiliation for the English parliament, and of final defeat both for the great cause and the brave men who for nearly twenty years had toiled and bled for it. For whose sake, then, was the presbyterian royalist at Westminster to fast and pray? It was the sorest dilemma of his life.

If this was the supreme crisis of the rebellion, it was the supreme moment for Cromwell. On May 1, 1648, by order of Fairfax and the council of war, he rode off to South Wales to take command of the parliamentary forces there. He carried in his breast the unquenched assurance that he went forth like Moses or like Joshua, the instrument of the purposes of the Most High; but it was not in his temperament to forget that he might peradventure be misreading the divine counsels, and well he knew that if his confidence were not made good, he was leaving relentless foes in the parliament behind him, and that if he failed in the hazardous duty that had been put upon him, destruction sure and unsparing awaited both his person and his cause. While Cromwell thus went west, Fairfax himself conducted a vigorous and decisive campaign in Kent and Essex, and then (June 13) sat down before Colchester, into which a strong body of royalists had thrown themselves, and where they made a long and stubborn defence. Lambert, with a small force, was despatched north to meet Langdale and the northern cavaliers, and to check the advance of the Scots. Here (July 8) Hamilton

crossed the border at the head of ten thousand men, ill equipped and ill trained, but counting on others to follow, and on the aid of three thousand more under Langdale. Three days later, as it happened, Cromwell's operations in Wales came to a successful end with the capture of Pembroke Castle. He instantly set his face northward, and by the end of the month reached Leicester. The marches were long and severe. Shoes and stockings were worn out, pay was many months in arrear, plunder was sternly forbidden, and not a few of the gallant warriors tramped barefoot from Wales into Yorkshire. With fire in their hearts, these tattered veterans carried with them the issue of the whole long struggle and the destinies of the three kingdoms. The fate of the king, the power of parliament, the future of constitutions, laws, and churches, were known to hang upon the account which these few thousand men should be able to give of the invaders from over the northern border. If the parliament had lost Naseby, the war might still have gone on, whereas if Hamilton should now reach London, the king would be master for good.

It was on August 12 that Cromwell joined Lambert on the high fells between Leeds and York, the united force amounting to some eight thousand men. Still uncertain whether his enemy would strike through Yorkshire or follow a western line through Lancashire and Wales, he planted himself here so as to command either course. Scouts brought the intelligence that the Scots and Langdale's force, afterwards estimated

by Oliver at twenty-one thousand men, were marching southward by way of Lancashire and making for London. As Cromwell knew, to hinder this was life and death, and to engage the enemy to fight was his business at all cost. Marching through the Craven country down the valley of the Ribble, he groped his way until he found himself in touch with the enemy's left flank at Preston. Hamilton was no soldier: his counsels were distracted by jealousy and division, national, political, and religious; his scouting was so ill done that he did not know that any serious force was in his neighbourhood; and his line extended over seven leagues from north to south, Preston about the centre, and the van towards Wigan, with the Ribble between van and rear. For three days of hard fighting the battles, named from Preston, lasted. That they were the result of a deliberately preconceived flank attack, ingeniously planned from the outset, is no longer believed. Things are hardly ever so in war, the military critics say. As in politics, Oliver in the field watched the progress of events, alert for any chance, and ever ready to strike on the instant when he knew that the blow would tell. The general idea in what was now done, was that it would be better to cut off Hamilton from Scotland, than directly to bar his advance to London.

The first encounter at Preston (August 17) was the hardest, when English fell upon English. For four fierce hours Langdale and his north-country royalists offered 'a very stiff resistance' to the valour and resolution of Cromwell's best troops, and at this

point the Cromwellians were superior in numbers. At last the royalists broke; the survivors scattered north and south, and were no more heard of. Next day it was the turn of Hamilton and his Scots. With difficulty they had got across the Ribble overnight, wet, weary, and hungry, and Oliver's troopers were too weary to follow them. At daybreak the Scots pressed on, the Ironsides at their heels in dogged pursuit, killing and taking prisoners all the way, though they were only fifty-five hundred foot and horse against twice as large a force of Scots. By night, says Oliver, we were 'very dirty and weary, having marched twelve miles of such ground as I never rode in my life, the day being very wet.' On the third day (August 19) the contest went fiercely forward. At Winwick the Scots made a resolute stand for many hours, and for a time the English gave way. Then they recovered, and chased the Scots three miles into Warrington. Hamilton lost heart, and directed Baillie to surrender his infantry to Cromwell, while he himself marched on with some three thousand horse over the Cheshire border into Delamere Forest. 'If I had a thousand horse,' wrote Cromwell, 'that could but trot thirty miles, I should not doubt but to give a very good account of them; but, truly, we are so harassed and haggled out in this business that we are not able to do more than walk at an easy pace after them. . . . They are the miserablest party that ever was; I durst engage myself with five hundred fresh horse and five hundred nimble foot, to destroy them all. My horse are miserably

beaten out, and I have ten thousand of them prisoners.' Hamilton was presently taken (August 25), and so the first campaign in which Cromwell had held an independent command-in-chief came to a glorious close. When next year Hamilton was put upon the trial that ended in the scaffold, he said of Cromwell that he was so courteous and civil as to perform more than he promised, and that acknowledgment was due for his favour to the poor wounded gentlemen that were left behind, and by him taken care of, and 'truly he performed more than he did capitulate for.'

The military student counts Preston the finest exploit of the war, and even pronounces it the mark of one of those who are born commanders by the grace of God. At least we may say that in the intrepid energy of the commander the fortitude, stoutness, and discipline of the men, and the momentous political results that hung upon their victory, the three days of Preston are among the most famous achievements of the time. To complete his task,—for he was always full of that instinct of practical thoroughness which abhors the leaving of a ragged edge,—Cromwell again turned northward to clear the border of what had been the rear of Hamilton's force, to recover the two great border strongholds of Berwick and Carlisle, and so to compose affairs in Scotland that the same perilous work should not need to be done over again. He bargained with Argyle, who desired nothing better, for the exclusion from power of the rival faction of

Hamiltonians and Engagers, and left a government of ultra-presbyterians installed, to the scandal of the English independents, but in fact Cromwell never showed himself more characteristically politic.

The local risings in England had been stamped out either by the alertness of the parliamentary authorities on the spot, or by the extraordinary vigour of the Derby House Committee, which was mainly independent. Fairfax never showed himself a better soldier. The city, as important a factor as the Houses themselves, and now leaning to the king upon conditions, threatened trouble from time to time; but opinion wavered, and in the end the city made no effective move. The absence of political agreement among the various elements was reflected in the absence of royalist concert. The insurrection in England was too early, or else the advance from Scotland was too late. By the time when Cromwell was marching through the Midlands to join Lambert in Yorkshire, the dead-weight of the majority of the population, who cared more for quiet than for either king or parliament, had for the time put out the scattered fires. The old international antipathy revived, and even royalists had seen with secret satisfaction the repulse of the nation who in their view had sold their king.

Meanwhile in parliament the presbyterians at first had not known what to wish, but they were now at no loss about what they had to fear. The paradox had turned out ill. The invaders had been beaten, but then the invaders were of their own persuasion,

and the victors were the hated sectaries with toleration inscribed upon their banners. The soldier's yoke would be more galling than ever, and the authority of Cromwell, which had been at its lowest when he set out for Wales, would be higher than it had ever been when he should come back from Scotland.

The Lords had become zealous royalists. They would not even join the Commons in describing the invading Scots as enemies. In both Houses the presbyterians had speedily taken advantage of the absence of some of the chief independents in the field, and were defiantly flying the old colours. In the days when Oliver was marching with his Ironsides to drive back the invasion that would have destroyed them all, the Lords regaled themselves by a fierce attack made upon the absent Cromwell by one who had been a major of his and enjoyed his confidence. The major's version of the things that Oliver had said would have made a plausible foundation for an impeachment, and at the same moment Holles, his bitterest enemy, came back to Westminster and took the presbyterian lead. So in the reckless intensity of party hatred the parliament were preparing for the destruction of the only man who could save them from the uncovenanted king. They were as heated as ever against the odious idea of toleration. On the day after the departure of Oliver they passed an ordinance actually punishing with death any one who should hold or publish not only atheism, but Arianism or Socinianism, and even the leading doctrines of

Arminians, Baptists, and harmless Quakers were made penal. Death was the punishment for denying any of the mysteries of the Trinity, or that any of the canonical books of Old Testament or New is the word of God; and a dungeon was the punishment for holding that the baptism of infants is unlawful and void, or that man is bound to believe no more than his reason can comprehend. Our heroic puritan age is not without atrocious blots.

Nevertheless the parliamentary persecutors were well aware that no ordinance of theirs, however savoury or drastic, would be of any avail unless new power were added to their right arm, and this power, as things then stood, they could only draw from alliance with the king. If they could bring him off from the Isle of Wight to London before Oliver and his men could return from the north, they might still have a chance. They assumed that Charles would see that here too was a chance for him. They failed to discern that they had no alternative between surrendering on any terms to the king, whose moral authority they could not do without, and yielding to the army, whose military authority was ready to break them. So little insight had they into the heart of the situation, that they took a course that exasperated the army, while they persisted in trying to impose such terms upon the king as nobody who knew him could possibly expect him to keep. Political incompetency could go no further, and the same failure inevitably awaited their designs as had

befallen Cromwell when, a year before, he had made a similar attempt.

On the day after the news of Oliver's success at Warrington the parliamentary majority repealed the vote against further addresses to the king, and then hurried on their proposals for a treaty. The negotiations opened at Newport in the Isle of Wight on September the 18th, and were spun out until near the end of November. 'They who had not seen the king,' says Clarendon, 'for near two years found his countenance extremely altered. From the time that his own servants had been taken from him he would never suffer his hair to be cut, nor cared to have any new clothes, so that his aspect and appearance was very different from what it had used to be; otherwise his health was good, and he was much more cheerful in his discourses toward all men, than could have been imagined after such mortification of all kinds. He was not at all dejected in his spirits, but carried himself with the same majesty he had used to do. His hair was all gray, which, making all others very sad, made it thought that he had sorrow in his countenance, which appeared only by that shadow.' There he sat at the head of the council-table, the fifteen commissioners of the parliament, including Vane and Fiennes, the only two men of the independent wing, seated at a little distance below him. Charles showed his usual power of acute dialectic, and he conducted the proceedings with all the cheerfulness, ease, and courtly gravity of a fine actor in an ironic play. The old ground of the propositions at Uxbridge, at Newcastle,

at Oxford, at Hampton Court, was once more trodden, with one or two new interludes. Charles, even when retreating, fought every inch with a tenacity that was the despair of men who each hour seemed to hear approaching nearer and nearer the clatter of the Cromwellian troopers.

Church government was now as ever the rock on which Charles chose that the thing should break off. Day after day he insisted on the partition of the apostolic office between bishops and presbyters, cited the array of texts from the Epistles, and demonstrated that Timothy and Titus were *episcopi pastorum*, bishops over presbyters, and not *episcopi gregis*, shepherds over sheep. In all this Charles was in his element, for he defended tenets that he sincerely counted sacred. At length after the distracted parliament had more than once extended the allotted time, the end came (November 27). Charles would agree that episcopacy should be suspended for three years, and that it might be limited, but he would not assent to its abolition, and he would not assent to an alienation of the fee of the church lands.

A modern student, if he reads the Newport treaty as a settlement upon paper, may think that it falls little short of the justice of the case. Certainly if the parties to it had been acting in good faith, this or almost any of the proposed agreements might have been workable. As it was, any treaty now made at Newport must be the symbol of a new working coalition between royalist and presbyterian, and any such coalition was a declaration of war against indepen-

dents and army. It was to undo the work of Preston and Colchester, to prepare a third sinister outbreak of violence and confusion, and to put Cromwell and his allies back again upon that sharp and perilous razor-edge of fortune from which they had just saved themselves.

It was their own fault again if the parliament did not know that Charles, from the first day of the negotiations to the last, was busily contriving plans for his escape from the island. He seems to have nursed a wild idea that if he could only find his way to Ireland he might, in conjunction with the ships from Holland under the command of Rupert, place himself at the head of an Irish invasion, with better fortune than had attended the recent invasion of the Scots. 'The great concession I have made to-day,' he wrote to a secret correspondent, 'was merely in order to my escape.' While publicly forbidding Ormonde to go on in Ireland, privately he writes to him not to heed any open commands until he has word that the king is free from restraint; Ormonde should pursue the way he is in with all possible vigour, and must not be astonished at any published concessions, for 'they would come to nothing.'

Watching the proceedings with fierce impatience, at last the army with startling rapidity brought the elusive conflict to a crisis. A week before the close of negotiations at Newport, a deputation from Fairfax and his general council of officers came up to the House as bearers of a great remonstrance. Like all that came from the pen of Ireton, it is powerfully argued,

and it is also marked by his gift of inordinate length. It fills nearly fifty pages of the parliamentary history, and could not have been read by a clerk at the table in much less than three hours. The points are simple enough. First, it would be stupidity rather than charity to suppose that the king's concessions arose from inward remorse or conviction, and therefore to continue to treat with him was both danger and folly. Second, he had been guilty of moral and civil acts judged capital in his predecessors, and therefore he ought to be brought to trial. Other delinquents besides the king in both wars ought to be executed, and the soldiers ought to have their arrears paid. This was the upshot of the document that the body of officers, some of whom had capital sentence executed upon themselves in days to come, now in respectful form presented to the House of Commons.

The majority in the Commons, with a high spirit that was out of all proportion to their power, insisted on postponing the consideration of the demands of 'a council of sectaries in arms.' In fact they never would or did consider them, and the giant remonstrance of the army went into the limbo of all the other documents in which those times were so marvellously fertile. As a presentation of the difficulties of the hour, it is both just and penetrating; but these after all were quite as easy to see as they were hard to overcome. We usually find a certain amount of practical reason even at the bottom of what passes for political fanaticism. What Harrison and his allies saw was, that if king and

parliament agreed, the army would be disbanded. If that happened, its leaders would be destroyed for what they had done already. If not, they would be proclaimed traitors and hinderers of the public peace, and destroyed for what they might be expected to do.

CHAPTER VI.

FINAL CRISIS—CROMWELL'S SHARE IN IT.

It is one of the mortifications of Cromwell's history, that we are unable accurately to trace his share in the events that immediately preceded the trial of the king. It was the most critical act of his history. Yet at nearly every turn in the incidents that prepared it, the diligent inquirer is forced to confess that there is little evidence to settle what was the precise part Cromwell played. This deep reserve and impenetrable obscurity was undoubtedly one of the elements of his reputation for craft and dissimulation. If they do not read a public man in an open page, men are easily tempted to suspect the worst.

When the negotiations were opened at Newport Cromwell was on his march into Scotland. He did not return until the later days of October, when the army and its leaders had grown uncontrollably restive at the slow and tortuous course of the dealings between the king and the commissioners of the parliament. Cromwell had thus been absent from Westminster for six months, since the time of his first despatch to put down the royalist rising in Wales. The stress of actual

war had only deepened the exasperation with which he had watched the gathering clouds, and which had found expression in the fierce language at the memorable prayer-meeting at Windsor. All this, however, is a long way from the decision that events were hurrying on, and from which more rapid and less apprehensive minds than his had long ceased to shrink. With what eyes he watched the new approaches to the king, he showed in a letter to the Speaker. After giving his report as a soldier, and showing that affairs in Scotland were in a thriving posture, he advances (October 9) on to other ground, and uses ominous language about 'the treachery of some in England, who had endangered the whole state and kingdom of England, and who now had cause to blush,' in spite of all the religious pretences by which they had masked their proceedings. This could only mean his presbyterian opponents. 'But God, who is not to be mocked or deceived, and is very jealous when his name and religion are made use of to carry on impious designs, has taken vengeance on such profanity, even to astonishment and admiration. And I wish, from the bottom of my heart, it may cause all to tremble and repent who have practised the like, to the blasphemy of his name and the destruction of his people, so as they may never presume to do the like again, and I think it is not unseasonable for me to take the humble boldness to say thus much at this time.'

Writing to Colonel Hammond (November 6), the custodian of the king, a month later from before the frowning walls of Pontefract Castle, Cromwell smiles

in good-humoured ridicule at the notion that it would be as safe to expect a good peace from a settlement on the base of moderate episcopacy as of presbytery. At the same time he vindicates his own presbyterian settlement in Scotland, throwing out his guiding principle in a parenthesis of characteristic fervour and sincerity. 'I profess to thee I desire from my heart, I have prayed for it, I have waited for the day to see union and right understanding between the godly people—Scots, English, Jews, Gentiles, presbyterians, independents, anabaptists, and all.' Still if the king could have looked over Hammond's shoulder as he read Cromwell's letter, he would not have seen a single word pointing to the terrible fate that was now so swiftly closing upon him. He would have seen nothing more formidable than a suggestion that the best course might be to break the sitting parliament and call a new one. To Charles this would have little terror, for he might well believe that no parliament could possibly be called under which his life would be put in peril.

A few days later Cromwell gave signs of rising anger in a letter to two members of Parliament, who inclined to lenient courses toward delinquents. 'Did not the House,' he asks, 'vote every man a traitor who sided with the Scots in their late invasion? And not without very clear justice, this being a more prodigious treason than any that hath been perfected in England before, because the former quarrel was that Englishmen might rule over one another, *this to vassalize us to a foreign nation.*' Here was the sting, for we have never

to forget that Oliver, like Milton, was ever English of the English. Then follow some ominous hints, though he still rather reports the mind of others than makes plain his own. 'Give me leave to tell you, I find a sense among the officers concerning such things as the treatment of these men to amazement, which truly is not so much to see their blood made so cheap as to see such manifest witnessings of God, so terrible and so just, no more reverenced.'

To Fairfax on the same day he writes in the same tone that he finds in the officers a very great sense of the sufferings of the kingdom, and a very great zeal to have impartial justice done upon offenders. 'And I must confess,' he adds, striking for the first time a new and dangerous note of his own, 'I do in all from my heart concur with them, and I verily think, and am persuaded, they are things which God puts into our hearts.' But he still moves very slowly, and follows rather than leads.

Finally he writes once more to Hammond on November 25, one of the most remarkable of all the letters he ever wrote. That worthy soldier had groaned under the burdens and misgivings of his position. 'Such talk as this,' says Cromwell, 'such words as heavy, sad, pleasant, easy, are but the snares of fleshly reasonings. Call not your burdens sad or heavy; it is laid on you by One from whom comes every good and perfect gift, being for the exercise of faith and patience, whereby in the end we shall be made perfect. Seek rather whether there be not some high and glorious meaning in all that chain of Provi-

dence which brought that Person [the king] to thee, and be sure that this purpose can never be the exaltation of the wicked.' From this strain of devout stoicism he turns to the policy of the hour.

Hammond was doubtful about the acts and aims of the extreme men as respects both king and parliament. 'It is true, as you say,' Cromwell replies, 'that authorities and powers are the ordinance of God, and that in England authority and power reside in the parliament. But these authorities may not do what they like, and still demand our obedience. All agree that there are cases in which it is lawful to resist. Is ours such a case? This, frankly, is the true question.' Then he produces three considerations, as if he were revolving over again the arguments that were turning his own mind. First, is it sound to stand on safety of the people as the supreme law? Second, will the treaty between king and parliament secure the safety of the people, or will it not frustrate the whole fruit of the war and bring back all to what it was, and worse? Third, is it not possible that the army, too, may be a lawful power, ordained by God to fight the king on stated grounds, and that the army may resist on the same grounds one name of authority, the parliament, as well as the other authority, the king?

Then he suddenly is dissatisfied with his three arguments. 'Truly,' he cries, 'this kind of reasoning may be but fleshly, either with or against, only it is good to try what truth may be in them.' Cromwell's understanding was far too powerful not to perceive that *salus populi* and the rest of it would serve just as

well for Strafford or for Charles as it served for Ireton and the army, and that usurpation by troopers must be neither more nor less hard to justify in principle than usurpation by a king. So he falls back on the simpler ground of 'providences,' always his favourite stronghold. 'They hang so together, have been so constant, clear, unclouded.' Was it possible that the same Lord who had been with his people in all their victorious actings was not with them in that steady and unmistakable growth of opinion about the present crisis, of which Hammond is so much afraid? 'You speak of tempting God. There are two ways of this. Action in presumptuous and carnal confidence is one; action in unbelief through diffidence is the other.' Though difficulties confronted them, the more the difficulties the more the faith.

From the point of a modern's carnal reasoning all this has a thoroughly sophistic flavour, and it leaves a doubt of its actual weight in Oliver's own mind at the moment. Nor was his mind really made up on independent grounds, for he goes on to say plainly that they in the northern army were in a waiting posture. It was not until the southern army put out its remonstrance that they changed. After that many were shaken. '*We could, perhaps, have wished the stay of it till after the treaty*, yet, seeing it is come out, we trust to rejoice in the will of the Lord, waiting his further pleasure.' This can only mean that Ireton and his party were pressing forward of their own will, and without impulse from Cromwell at Pontefract. Yet it is equally evident that he did not disapprove.

In concluding the letter he denounces the treaty of Newport as a 'ruining, hypocritical agreement,' and remonstrates with those of their friends who expect good from Charles—'good by this Man, against whom the Lord hath witnessed, and whom thou knowest!'

A writer of a hostile school has remarked in this memorable letter 'its cautious obscurity, shadowy significance; its suavity, tenderness, subtlety; the way in which he alludes to more than he mentions, suggests more than pronounces his own argumentative intention, and opens an indefinite view, all the hard features of which he softly puts aside' (J. B. Mozley). Quite true; but what if this be the real Cromwell, and represents the literal working of his own habit and temper?

When the letter reached the Isle of Wight Hammond was no longer there. The army had made up their minds to act, and the blow had fallen. The fate of the king was sealed. In this decision there is no evidence that Cromwell had any share. His letter to Hammond is our last glimpse of him, and from that and the rest the sounder conclusion seems to be that even yet he would fain have gone slow, but was forced to go fast. Charles might possibly even at the eleventh hour have made his escape, but he still nursed the illusion that the army could not crush the parliament without him. He had, moreover, given his parole. When reminded that he had given it not to the army but to the parliament, his sombre pride for once withstood a sophism. At break of the winter day (December 1) a body of officers broke into his chamber,

put him into a coach, conducted him to the coast, and then transported him across the Solent to Hurst Castle, a desolate and narrow blockhouse standing at the edge of a shingly spit on the Hampshire shore. In these dreary quarters he remained a fortnight. The last scene was now rapidly approaching of that desperate drama in which every one of the actors—king, parliament, army, Cromwell—seemed as if engaged in a death struggle with some implacable necessity.

At Westminster, meanwhile, futile proceedings in the House of Commons had been brought to a rude close. The House resolved by a large majority once more (November 30) not to consider the army remonstrance, and the army promptly replied by marching into London two days later (December 2). Two days after that, the House with a long and very sharp discussion put upon record a protest against the forcible removal of the king without their knowledge or consent. They then proceeded to debate the king's answers to their commissioners at the Isle of Wight. A motion was made that the answers should be accepted, but the motion finally carried was in the weakened and dilatory form that the answers 'were a ground for the House to proceed upon for the settlement of the peace of the kingdom' (December 5). This was the final provocation to the soldiers. The same afternoon a full consultation took place between some of the principal officers of the army and a number of members of parliament. One side were for forcible dissolution, as Cromwell had at one

time been for it; the other were for the less sweeping measure of a partial purge. A committee of three members of the House and three officers of the army was ordered to settle the means for putting a stop to proceedings in parliament, that were nothing less than a forfeiture of its trust. These six agreed that the army should be drawn out next morning, and guards placed in Westminster Hall and the lobby, that 'none might be permitted to pass into the House, but such as had continued faithful to the public interest.' At seven o'clock next morning (December 6) Colonel Pride was at his post in the lobby, and before night one hundred and forty-three members had either been locked up or forcibly turned back from the doors of the House of Commons. The same night Cromwell returned from Yorkshire and lay at Whitehall where Fairfax already was,—I suppose for the first time. 'There,' says Ludlow, 'and at other places, Cromwell declared that he had not been acquainted with this design, yet, since it was done, he was glad of it and would endeavour to maintain it.'

The process was completed next day. A week later (December 15) the council of officers determined that Charles should be brought to Windsor, and Fairfax sent orders accordingly. In the depth of the winter night, the king in the desolate keep on the sea-shingle heard the clanking of the drawbridge, and at daybreak he learned that the redoubtable Major Harrison had arrived. Charles well knew how short a space divides a prince's

prison from his grave. He had often revolved in his mind 'sad stories of the death of kings'—of Henry VI., of Edward II. murdered at Berkeley, of Richard II. at Pontefract, of his grandmother at Fotheringay,—and he thought that the presence of Harrison must mean that his own hour had now come for a like mysterious doom. Harrison was no man for these midnight deeds, though he was fervid in his belief, and so he told the king, that justice was no respecter of persons, and great and small alike must be submitted to the law. Charles was relieved to find that he was only going 'to exchange the worst of his castles for the best,' and after a ride of four days (December 19-23) through the New Forest, Winchester, Farnham, Bagshot, he found himself once more at the noblest of the palaces of the English sovereigns. Here for some three weeks he passed infatuated hours in the cheerful confidence that the deadlock was as immovable as ever, that his enemies would find the knot inextricable, that he was still their master, and that the blessed day would soon arrive when he should fit round their necks the avenging halter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEATH OF THE KING.

The Commons meanwhile, duly purged or packed, had named a committee to consider the means of bringing the king to justice, and they passed an ordinance (January 1, 1649) for setting up to try him a High Court of Justice, composed of one hundred and fifty commissioners and three judges. After going through its three readings, and backed by a resolution that by the fundamental laws of the kingdom it is treason in the king to levy war against the parliament and kingdom of England, the ordinance was sent up to the Lords. The Lords only numbering twelve on this strange occasion, promptly, passionately, and unanimously rejected it. The fifty or sixty members who were now the acting House of Commons, retorted with revolutionary energy. They instantly passed a resolution (January 4) affirming three momentous propositions: that the people are the original of power; that the Commons in parliament assembled have the supreme power; and that what they enact has the force of law, even without the consent of either king or lords. Then

they passed their ordinance over again, omitting the three judges, and reducing the commissioners to one hundred and thirty-five (January 6). Two days later the famous High Court of Justice met for the first time in the Painted Chamber, but out of one hundred and thirty-five persons named in the act, no more than fifty-two appeared, Fairfax, Cromwell, and Ireton being among them.

We must pause to consider what was the part that Cromwell played in this tragical unravelling of the plot. For long it can hardly have been the guiding part. He was not present when the officers decided to order the king to be brought from Hurst Castle to Windsor (December 15). He is known, during the week following that event, to have been engaged in grave counsel with Speaker Lenthall and two other eminent men of the same legal and cautious temper, as though he were still painfully looking for some lawful door of escape from an impassable dilemma. Then he made a strong attempt to defer the king's trial, until after they had tried other important delinquents in the second war. Finally there is a shadowy story of new overtures to the king made with Cromwell's connivance on the very eve of the day of fate. On close handling the tale crumbles into guesswork, for the difference between a safe and an unsafe guess is not enough to transform a possible into an actual event; and a hunt after conjectural motives for conjectural occurrences is waste of time. The curious delay in Cromwell's return to London and the centre of action is not

without significance. He reaches Carlisle on October 14, he does not summon Pontefract until November 9, and he remains before it until the opening of December. It is hard to understand why he should not have left Lambert, a most excellent soldier, in charge of operations at an earlier date, unless he had been wishful to let the manœuvres in parliament and camp take what course they might. He had no stronger feeling in emergency than a dread of forestalling the Lord's leadings. The cloud that wraps Cromwell about during the terrible month between his return from Yorkshire and the erection of the High Court, is impenetrable; and we have no better guide than our general knowledge of his politic understanding, his caution, his persistence, his freedom from revengeful temper, his habitual slowness in making decisive moves.

We may be sure that all through the month, as 'he lay in one of the King's rich beds at Whitehall,' where Fairfax and he had taken up their quarters, Cromwell revolved all the perils and sounded all the depths of the abyss to which necessity was hurrying the cause and him. What courses were open? They might by ordinance depose the king, and then either banish him from the realm, or hold him for the rest of his days in the Tower. Or could they try and condemn him, and then trust to the dark shadow of the axe upon his prison wall to frighten him at last into full surrender? Even if this design prevailed, what sanctity could the king or his successors be expected to attach to constitutional concessions granted

under duress so dire? Again, was monarchy the indispensable key-stone, to lock all the parts of national government into their places? If so, then —the king removed by deposition or by abdication, —perhaps one of his younger sons might be set up in his stead with the army behind him. Was any course of this temporising kind practicable, even in the very first step of it, apart from later consequences? Or was the temper of the army too fierce, the dream of the republican too vivid, the furnace of faction too hot? For we have to recollect that nothing in all the known world of politics is so intractable as a band of zealots conscious that they are a minority, yet armed by accident with the powers of a majority. Party considerations were not likely to be omitted, and to destroy the king was undoubtedly to strike a potent instrument out of the hands of the presbyterians. Whatever reaction might follow in the public mind would be to the advantage of royalism, not of presbyterianism, and so indeed it ultimately proved. Yet to bring the king to trial and to cut off his head—is it possible to suppose that Cromwell was blind to the endless array of new difficulties that would instantly spring up from that inexpiable act? Here was the fatal mischief. No other way may have been conceivable out of the black flood of difficulties in which the ship and its fiery crew were tossing, and Cromwell with his firm gaze had at last persuaded himself that this way must be tried. What is certain is, that he cannot have forgotten to count the cost, and he must have

known what a wall he was raising against that settlement of the peace of the nation for which he so devoutly hoped.

After all, violence, though in itself always an evil and always the root of evil, is not the worst of evils, so long as it does not mean the obliteration of the sense of righteousness and of duty. And, however we may judge the balance of policy to have inclined, men like Cromwell felt to the depth of their hearts that in putting to death the man whose shifty and senseless counsels had plunged the land in bloodshed and confusion, they were performing an awful act of sovereign justice and executing the decree of the Supreme. Men like Ludlow might feed and fortify themselves on misinterpretations of sanguinary texts from the Old Testament. 'I was convinced,' says that hard-tempered man, 'that an accommodation with the king was unjust and wicked in the nature of it by the express words of God's law; that blood defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.' Cromwell was as much addicted to an apt text as anybody, but the stern crisis of his life was not to be settled by a single verse of the Bible. Only one utterance of his at this grave moment survives, and though in the highest degree remarkable, it is opaque rather than transparent. When the ordinance creating the High Court was before the House of Commons, he said this: —'If any man whatsoever hath carried on the design of deposing the king, and disinheriting his posterity; or, if any man had yet such a design, he should be the

greatest rebel and traitor in the world; but since the providence of God and Necessity hath cast this upon us, I shall pray God to bless our counsels, though I be not provided on the sudden to give you counsel.' Providence and Necessity—that is to say, the purpose of heaven disclosed in the shape of an invincible problem, to which there was only one solution, and that a solution imposed by force of circumstance and not to be defended by mere secular reasoning.

However slow and painful the steps, a decision once taken was to Cromwell irrevocable. No man was ever more free from the vice of looking back, and he now threw himself into the king's trial at its final stages with the same ruthless energy with which he had ridden down the king's men at Marston or Naseby. Men of virtue, courage, and public spirit as eminent as his own, stood resolutely aside, and would not join him. Algernon Sidney, whose name had been put in among the judges, went into the Painted Chamber with the others, and after listening to the debate, withstood Cromwell, Bradshaw, and the others to the face, on the double ground that the king could be tried by no court, and that by such a court as that was, no man at all could be tried. Cromwell broke in upon him in hoarse anger, 'I tell you, we will cut off his head with the crown upon it.' 'I cannot stop you,' Sidney replied, 'but I will keep myself clean from having any hand in this business.' Vane had been startled even by Pride's Purge, and though he and Oliver were as brothers to one another, he refused either now to take any part in the trial, or ever to approve the execution afterwards.

Stories are told indicative of Cromwell's rough excitement and misplaced buffooneries, but they are probably mythic. It is perhaps true that on the first day of the trial, looking forth from the Painted Chamber, he saw the king step from his barge on his way to Westminster Hall, and 'with a face as white as the wall,' called out to the others that the king was coming, and that they must be ready to answer what was sure to be the king's first question, namely, by what authority they called him before them.

This was indeed the question that the king put, and would never let drop. It had been Sidney's question, and so far as law and constitution went, there was no good answer to it. The authority of the tribunal was founded upon nothing more valid than a mere resolution, called an ordinance, of some fifty members—what was in truth little more than a bare quorum—of a single branch of parliament, originally composed of nearly ten times as many, and deliberately reduced for the express purpose of such a resolution by the violent exclusion a month before of one hundred and forty-three of its members. If the legal authority was null, the moral authority for the act creating the High Court was no stronger. It might be well enough to say that the people are the origin of power, but as a matter of fact the handful who erected the High Court of Justice notoriously did not represent the people in any sense of that conjuror's word. They were never chosen by the people to make laws apart from king and lords; and they were now picked out by the soldiers to do the behest of soldiers.

In short, the High Court of Justice was hardly better or worse than a drum-head court martial, and had just as much or just as little legal authority to try King Charles, as a board of officers would have had to try him under the orders of Fairfax or Oliver if they had taken him prisoner on the field of Naseby. Bishop Butler in his famous sermon in 1741 on the anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles, takes hypocrisy for his subject, and declares that no age can show an example of hypocrisy parallel to such a profaning of the forms of justice as the arraignment of the king. And it is here that Butler lets fall the sombre reflection, so poignant to all who vainly expect too much from the hearts and understandings of mankind, that 'the history of all ages and all countries will show what has been really going forward over the face of the earth, to be very different from what has been always pretended; and that virtue has been everywhere professed much more than it has been anywhere practised.' We may, if we be so minded, accept Butler's general reflection, and assuredly it cannot lightly be dismissed; but it is hardly the best explanation of this particular instance. Self-deception is a truer as well as a kinder word than hypocrisy, and here in one sense the institution of something with the aspect of a court was an act of homage to conscience and to habit of law. Many must have remembered the clause in the Petition of Right, not yet twenty years old, forbidding martial law. Yet martial law this was and nothing else, if that be the name for the uncontrolled arbitrament of the man with the sword.

In outer form as in interior fact, the trial of the king had much of the rudeness of the camp, little of the solemnity of a judicial tribunal. That pathetic element so strong in human nature, save when rough action summons; that imaginative sensibility, which is the fountain of pity when there is time for tears, and leisure to listen to the heart; these counted for nothing in that fierce and peremptory hour. Such moods are for history or for onlookers in stern scenes, not for the actors. Charles and Cromwell had both of them long stood too close to death in many grisly shapes, had seen too many slaughtered men, to shrink from an encounter without quarter. Westminster Hall was full of soldiery, and resounded with their hoarse shouts for justice and execution. The king with his hat upon his head eyed the judges with unaffected scorn, and with unmeaning iteration urged his point, that they were no court and that he was there by no law. Bradshaw, the president, retorted with high-handed warnings to his captive that contumacy would be of no avail. Cromwell was present at every sitting with one doubtful exception. For three days (Jan. 20, 22, 23) the altercation went on, as fruitless as it was painful, for the Court intended that the king should die. He was incredulous to the last. On the fourth and fifth days (Jan. 24-5) the Court sat in private in the Painted Chamber, and listened to depositions that could prove nothing not already fully known. The object was less to satisfy the conscience of the Court, than to make time for pressure on its more backward members. There is some evidence that Cromwell was among the

most fervid in enforcing the point that they could not come to a settlement of the true religion, until the king, the arch obstructor, was put out of the way. On the next day (Jan. 26) the Court numbering sixty-two members adopted the verdict and sentence, that Charles was a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation, and that he should be put to death by the severing of his head from his body. On the 27th an end came to the proceedings. Charles was for the fourth time brought into the hall, and amid much noise and disorder he attempted to speak. He sought an interview with the Lords and Commons in the Painted Chamber, but this after deliberation was refused. The altercations between the king and Bradshaw were renewed, and after a long harangue from Bradshaw sentence was pronounced. The king, still endeavouring in broken sentences to make himself heard, was hustled away from the hall by his guards. The composure, piety, seclusion, and silence in which he passed the three days of life that were left, made a deep impression on the time, and have moved men's common human-heartedness ever since. In Charles himself, whether for foe or friend, an Eliot or a Strafford, pity was a grace unknown.

On the fatal day (Jan. 30), he was taken to Whitehall, then more like a barrack than a palace. Fairfax, Cromwell, Ireton, and Harrison, were probably all in the building when he arrived, though the first of them had held stiffly aloof from all the proceedings of the previous ten days. A story was told afterwards

that just before the execution, Cromwell, seated in Ireton's room, when asked for a warrant addressed to the executioner (who seems to have been Brandon, the common hangman), wrote out the order with his own hand, for signature by one of the three officers to whom the High Court had addressed the actual death-warrant. Charles bore himself with unshaken dignity and fortitude to the end. At a single stroke the masked headsman did his work. Ten days later the corpse was conveyed by a little band of devoted friends to Windsor, where amid falling flakes of snow they took it into Saint George's Chapel. Clarendon stamps upon our memories the mournful coldness, the squalor, and the desolation like a scene from some grey underworld:—'Then they went into the church to make choice of a place for burial. But when they entered into it, which they had been so well acquainted with, they found it so altered and transformed, all tombs, inscriptions, and those landmarks pulled down, by which all men knew every particular place in that church, and such a dismal mutation over the whole, that they knew not where they were; nor was there one old officer that had belonged to it, or knew where our princes had used to be interred. At last there was a fellow of the town who undertook to tell them the place, where, he said, "there was a vault in which King Harry the Eighth and Queen Jane Seymour were interred." As near that place as could conveniently be, they caused the grave to be made. There the king's body was laid without any words, or other ceremonies than the tears and sighs of the few beholders.

Upon the coffin was a plate of silver fixed with these words only—*King Charles*, 1648. When the coffin was put in, the black velvet pall that had covered it was thrown over it, and then the earth thrown in, which the governor stayed to see perfectly done, and then took the keys of the church, which was seldom put to any use.'

Cromwell's own view of this momentous transaction was constant. A year later he speaks to the officers of 'the great fruit of the war, to wit, the execution of exemplary justice upon the prime leader of all this quarrel.' Many months after this, he talks of the turning-out of the tyrant in a way which the Christians in after times will mention with honour, and all tyrants in the world look at with fear; many thousands of saints in England rejoice to think of it; they that have acted in this great business have given a reason of their faith in the action, and are ready further to do it against all gainsayers; the execution was an eminent witness of the Lord for bloodguiltiness. In a conversation again, one evening, at Edinburgh, he is said to have succeeded in converting some hostile presbyterians to the view that the taking away of the king's life was inevitable. There is a story that while the corpse of the king still lay in the gallery at Whitehall, Cromwell was observed by unseen watchers to come muffled in his cloak to the coffin, and raising the lid, and gazing on the face of the king, was heard to murmur several times, '*Cruel necessity.*' The incident is pretty certainly apocryphal, for this was not the dialect of Oliver's philosophy.

Extravagant things have been said about the execution of the king by illustrious men from Charles Fox to Carlyle. 'We may doubt,' said Fox, 'whether any other circumstance has served so much to raise the character of the English nation in the opinion of Europe.' 'This action of the English regicides,' says Carlyle, 'did in effect strike a damp like death through the heart of Flunkeyism universally in this world. Whereof Flunkeyism, Cant, Cloth-worship, or whatever ugly name it have, has gone about miserably sick ever since, and is now in these generations very rapidly dying.' Cant, alas, is not slain on any such easy terms by a single stroke of the republican headsman's axe. As if for that matter, force, violence, sword, and axe, never conceal a cant and an unveracity of their own, viler and crueller than any other. In fact, the very contrary of Carlyle's proposition as to death and damp might more fairly be upheld. For this at least is certain, that the execution of Charles I. kindled and nursed for many generations a lasting flame of cant, flunkeyism, or whatever else be the right name of spurious and unmanly sentimentalism, more lively than is associated with any other business in our whole national history.

The two most sensible things to be said about the trial and execution of Charles I. have often been said before. One is that the proceeding was an act of war, and was just as defensible or just as assailable, and on the same grounds, as the war itself. The other remark, thought tolerably conclusive alike by Milton and by Voltaire, is that the regicides treated Charles precisely

as Charles, if he had won the game, undoubtedly promised himself with law or without law that he would treat them. The author of the attempt upon the Five Members in 1642 was not entitled to plead punctilious demurrers to a revolutionary jurisdiction. From the first it had been *My head or thy head*, and Charles had lost. 'In my opinion,' said Alfieri in the fanciful dedication of his play of *Agis* to Charles, 'one can in no way make a tragedy of your tragical death, for the cause of it was not sublime.'

BOOK IV.

(1649-53)

CHAPTER I.

THE COMMONWEALTH.

The death of the king made nothing easier, and changed nothing for the better; it removed no old difficulties, and it added new. Cromwell and his allies must have expected as much, and they confronted the task with all the vigilance and energy of men unalterably convinced of the goodness of their cause, confidently following the pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night. Their goal was the establishment of a central authority; the unification of the kingdoms; the substitution of a nation for a dynasty as the mainspring of power and the standard of public aims; a settlement of religion; the assertion of maritime strength; the protection and expansion of national commerce. Long, tortuous, and rough must be the road. A small knot of less than a hundred commoners represented all that was left of parliament, and we have a test of the condition to which it was reduced in the fact that during the three months after Pride's Purge, the thirteen divisions that took place represented an average attendance of less than sixty.

They resolved that the House of Peers was useless and dangerous and ought to be abolished. They resolved a couple of days later that experience had shown the office of a king, and to have the power of the office in any single person, to be unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous, and therefore that this also ought to be abolished. In March these resolutions were turned into what were called acts of parliament. A Council of State was created to which the executive power was intrusted. It consisted of forty-one persons and was to last a year, three-fourths of its members being at the same time members of parliament. Provision was made for the administration of justice as far as possible by the existing judges, and without change in legal principles or judicial procedure. On May 19th a final act was passed proclaiming England to be a free Commonwealth, to be governed by the representatives of the people in parliament without king or House of Lords. Writs were to run in the name of the Keepers of the Liberties of England. The date was marked as the First Year of Freedom, by God's blessing restored.

We can hardly suppose that Cromwell was under any illusion that constitutional resolutions on paper could transmute a revolutionary group, installed by military force and by that force subsisting, into a chosen body of representatives of the people administering a free commonwealth. He had striven to come to terms with the king in 1647, and had been reluctantly forced into giving him up in 1648. He was now accepting a form of government resting upon

the same theoretical propositions that he had stoutly combated in the camp debates two years before, and subject to the same ascendancy of the soldier of which he had then so clearly seen all the fatal mischief. But Cromwell was of the active, not the reflective temper. What he saw was that the new government had from the first to fight for its life. All the old elements of antagonism remained. The royalists, outraged in their deepest feelings by the death of their lawful king, had instantly transferred their allegiance with heightened fervour to his lawful successor. The presbyterians who were also royalist were exasperated both by the failure of their religious schemes, and by the sting of political and party defeat. The peers, though only a few score in number yet powerful by territorial influence, were cut to the quick by the suppression of their legislative place. The episcopal clergy, from the highest ranks in the hierarchy to the lowest, suffered with natural resentment the deprivation of their spiritual authority and their temporal revenues. It was calculated that the friends of the policy of intolerance were no less than five-sevenths of the people of the country. Yet the independents, though so inferior in numbers, were more important than either presbyterians or episcopalians, for the reason that their power was concentrated in an omnipotent army. The movement named generically after them, comprised a hundred heterogeneous shades, from the grand humanism of Milton, down to the fancies of whimsical mystics who held that it was sin to wear garments, and believed that heaven is only

six miles off. The old quarrel about church polity was almost overwhelmed by turbid tides of theological enthusiasm. This enthusiasm developed strange theocracies, nihilisms, anarchies, and it soon became one of the most pressing tasks of the new republic, as afterwards of Cromwell himself, to grapple with the political danger that overflowed from the heavings of spiritual confusion. A royalist of the time thus describes the position:—'The Independents possessed all the forts, towns, navy and treasure; the Presbyterians yet hold a silent power by means of the divines, and the interest of some nobility and gentry, especially in London and the great towns. His Majesty's party in England is so poor, so disjointed, so severely watched by both factions, that it is impossible for them to do anything on their own score.'

The other two ancient kingdoms that were joined to the new-born State of England were each of them centres of hostility and peril to the common fabric. On the continent of Europe, the new rulers of England had not a friend; even the Dutch were drawn away from them by a powerful Orange party that was naturally a Stuart party. It seemed as if an accident might make a hostile foreign combination possible, and almost as if only a miracle could prevent it. Rupert had possessed himself of a small fleet, the royalists were masters of the Isle of Man, of Jersey and the Scilly Isles, and English trade was the prey of their piratical enterprise. The Commonwealth had hardly counted its existence by weeks, before it was menaced by deadly danger in its very

foundations, by signs of an outbreak in the armed host, now grown to over forty thousand men, that had destroyed the king, mutilated the parliament, and fastened its yoke alike upon the parliamentary remnant, the Council of State, and the majority of the inhabitants of the realm. Natural right, law of nature, one He as good as another He, the reign of Christ and his saints in a fifth and final monarchy, all the rest of the theocratic and levelling theories that had startled Cromwell in 1647, were found to be just as applicable against a military commonwealth as against a king by divine right. The cry of the political leveller was led by Lilburne, one of the men whom all revolutions are apt to engender—intractable, narrow, dogmatic, pragmatic, clever hands at syllogism, liberal in uncharitable imputation and malicious construction, honest in their rather questionable way, animated by a pharisaic love of self-applause which is in truth not any more meritorious nor any less unsafe than vain love of the world's applause; in a word, not without sharp insight into theoretic principle, and thinking quite as little of their own ease as of the ease of others, but without a trace of the instinct for government or a grain of practical common sense. Such was Lilburne the headstrong, and such the temper in thousands of others with whom Cromwell had painfully to wrestle for all the remainder of his life. The religious enthusiasts, who formed the second great division of the impracticable, were more attractive than the scribblers of abstract politics, but they were just as troublesome. A re-

flective royalist or presbyterian might well be excused for asking himself whether a party with men of this stamp for its mainspring could ever be made fit for the great art of working institutions and controlling the forces of a mighty state. Lilburne's popularity, which was immense, signified not so much any general sympathy with his first principles or his restless politics, as aversion to military rule or perhaps indeed to any rule. If the mutiny spread and the army broke away, the men at the head of the government knew that all was gone. They acted with celerity and decision. Fairfax and Cromwell handled the mutineers with firmness tempered by clemency, without either vindictiveness or panic. Of the very few who suffered military execution, some were made popular martyrs,—and this was an indication the more how narrow was the base on which the Commonwealth had been reared.

Other dangers came dimly into view. For a moment it seemed as if political revolution was to contain the seeds of social revolution; Levellers were followed by Diggers. War had wasted the country and impoverished the people, and one day (April 1650), a small company of poor men were found digging up the ground on St. George's Hill in Surrey, sowing it with carrots and beans, and announcing that they meant to do away with all enclosures. It was the reproduction in the seventeenth century of the story of Robert Kett of Norfolk in the sixteenth. The eternal sorrows of the toiler led him to dream, as in the dawn of the Reformation peasants had

dreamed, that the Bible sentences for them too had some significance. 'At this very day,' wrote Gerrard Winstanley, a neglected figure of those times, 'poor people are forced to work for twopence a day, and corn is dear. And the tithing priest stops their mouth, and tells them that "inward satisfaction of mind" was meant by the declaration: The poor shall inherit the earth. I tell you the Scripture is to be really and materially fulfilled. You jeer at the name Leveller. I tell you Jesus Christ is the head Leveller.' (Gooch, p. 220.) Fairfax and the Council wisely made little of the affair, and people awoke to the hard truth that to turn a monarchy into a free commonwealth is not enough to turn the purgatory of our social life into a paradise.

Meanwhile the minority possessed of power resorted to the ordinary devices of unpopular rule. They levied immense fines upon the property of delinquents, sometimes confiscating as much as half the value. A rigorous censorship of the press was established. The most diligent care was enjoined upon the local authorities to prevent troublesome public meetings. The pulpits were watched, that nothing should be said in prejudice of the peace and honour of the government. The old law of treason was stiffened, but so long as trial by jury was left, the hardening of the statute was of little use. The High Court of Justice was therefore set up to deal with offenders for whom no law was strong enough.

The worst difficulties of the government, however,

lay beyond the reach of mere rigour of police at home. Both in Ireland and Scotland the regicide Commonwealth found foes. All the three kingdoms were in a blaze. The fury of insurrection in Ireland had lent fuel to rebellion in England, and the flames of rebellion in England might have been put out, but for the necessities of revolt in Scotland. The statesmen of the Commonwealth misunderstood the malady in Ireland, and they failed to found a stable system in Britain, but they grasped with amazing vigour and force the problem of dealing with the three kingdoms as a whole. This strenuous comprehension marked them out as men of originality, insight, and power. Charles II. was in different fashions instantly proclaimed king in both countries, and the only question was from which of the two outlying kingdoms would the new king wage war against the rulers who had slain his father, and usurped the powers that were by law and right his own. Ireland had gone through strange vicissitudes during the years of the civil struggle in England. It has been said that no human intellect could make a clear story of the years of triple and fourfold distraction in Ireland from the rebellion of 1641 down to the death of Charles I. Happily it is not necessary for us to attempt the task. Three remarkable figures stand out conspicuously in the chaotic scene. Ormonde represented in varied forms the English interest—one of the most admirably steadfast, patient, clear-sighted and honourable names in the list of British statesmen. Owen Roe O'Neill, a good soldier, a man of valour and character, was

the patriotic champion of catholic Ireland. Rinuccini, the Pope's nuncio,—an able and ambitious man, ultramontane, caring very little for either Irish landlords or Irish nationalists, caring not at all for heretical royalists, but devoted to the interests of his church all over the world,—was in his heart bent upon erecting a papal Ireland under the protection of some foreign catholic sovereign.

All these types, though with obvious differences on the surface, may easily be traced in Irish affairs down to our own century. The nearest approach to an organ of government was the supreme council of the confederate catholics at Kilkenny, in which the substantial interest was that of the catholic English of the Pale. Between them and the nuncio little love was lost, for Ireland has never been ultramontane. A few days before the death of the king (Jan. 1649), Ormonde made what promised to be a prudent peace with the catholics at Kilkenny, by which the confederate Irish were reconciled to the crown, on the basis of complete toleration for their religion and freedom for their parliament. It was a great and lasting misfortune that puritan bigotry prevented Oliver from pursuing the same policy on behalf of the Commonwealth, as Ormonde pursued on behalf of the king. The confederate catholics, long at bitter feud with the ultramontane nuncio, bade him intermeddle no more with the affairs of that kingdom; and a month after the peace Rinuccini departed.

It was clear that even such small hold as the parliament still retained upon Ireland was in instant

peril. The old dread of an Irish army being landed upon the western shores of England in the royalist interest, possibly in more or less concert with invaders from Scotland, revived in full force. Cromwell's view of the situation was explained to the Council of State at Whitehall (March 23, 1649). The question was whether he would undertake the Irish command. 'If we do not endeavour to make good our interest there,' he said, after describing the singular combination that Ormonde was contriving against them, 'we shall not only have our interests rooted out there, but they will in a very short time be able to land forces in England. I confess I had rather be overrun with a Cavalierish interest than a Scotch interest; I had rather be overrun with a Scotch interest than an Irish interest; and I think of all, this is the most dangerous.' Stating the same thing differently, he argued that even Englishmen who were for a restoration upon terms ought still to resist the forced imposition of a king upon them either by Ireland or by Scotland. In other words, the contest between the crown and the parliament had now developed into a contest, first for union among the three kingdoms, and next for the predominance of England within that union. Of such antique date are some modern quarrels.

CHAPTER II.

CROMWELL IN IRELAND.

It is not enough to describe one who has the work of a statesman to do as 'a veritable Heaven's messenger clad in thunder.' We must still recognise that the reasoning faculty in man is good for something. 'I could long for an Oliver without Rhetoric at all,' Carlyle exclaims, 'I could long for a Mahomet, whose persuasive-eloquence with wild flashing heart and scimitar, is: "Wretched mortal, give up that; or by the Eternal, thy maker and mine, I will kill thee! Thou blasphemous scandalous Misbirth of Nature, is not even that the kindest thing I can do for thee, if thou repent not and alter, in the name of Allah?"' Even such sonorous oracles as these do not altogether escape the guilt of rhetoric. As if, after all, there might not be just as much of sham, phantasm, emptiness, and lies in Action as in Rhetoric. Archbishop Laud with his wild flashing scimitar slicing off the ears of Prynne, Charles maliciously doing Eliot to death in the Tower, the familiars of the Holy Office, Spaniards exterminating hapless Indians, English puritans slaying Irishwomen at Naseby, the monarchs of the Spanish Peninsula driving populations of Jews

and Moors wholesale and innocent to exile and despair —all these would deem themselves entitled to hail their hapless victims as blasphemous misbirths of Nature. What is the test? How can we judge? Dithyrambs are of no use. It is not a question between Action and Rhetoric, but the far profounder question alike in word and in deed between just and unjust, rational and shortsighted, cruel and humane.

The parliament faced the Irish danger with characteristic energy, nor would Cromwell accept the command without characteristic deliberation. 'Whether I go or stay,' he said, 'is as God shall incline my heart.' And he had no leading of this kind, until he had in a practical way made sure that his forces would have adequate provision, and a fair settlement of arrears. The departure of Julius Cæsar for Gaul at a moment when Rome was in the throes of civil confusion has sometimes been ascribed to a desire to make the west a drill-ground for his troops, in view of the military struggle that he foresaw approaching in Italy. Motives of a similar sort have been invented to explain Oliver's willingness to absent himself from Westminster at critical hours. The explanation is probably as far-fetched in one case as in the other. The self-interest of the calculating statesman would hardly prompt a distant and dangerous military expedition, for Cromwell well knew, as he had known when he started for Preston in 1648, what active enemies he left behind him, some in the ranks of the army, others comprehending the whole of the

presbyterian party, and all embittered by the triumph of the military force to which instrumentally they owed their very existence. The simplest explanation is in Oliver's case the best. A soldier's work was the next work to be done, and he might easily suppose that the God of Battles meant him to do it. Everybody else supposed the same.

It was August (1649) before Cromwell embarked, and before sailing, 'he did expound some places of scripture excellently well, and pertinent to the occasion.' He arrived in Dublin as Lord-Lieutenant and commander of the forces. After a short time for the refreshment of his weather-beaten men, he advanced northwards, some ten thousand strong, to Drogheda, and here his Irish career began with an incident of unhappy fame. Modern research adds little in the way either of correction or of amplification to Cromwell's own story. He arrived before Drogheda on September 3rd, the memorable date of three other decisive days in his history. A week later he summoned Ormonde's garrison to surrender, and receiving no reply he opened fire, and breached the wall in two places. The next day, about five in the evening, he began the storm, and after a hot and stiff defence that twice beat back his veterans, on the third assault, with Oliver himself at the head of it, they entered the town and were masters of the royalist entrenchments. Aston, the general in command, scoured up a steep mound, 'a place very strong and of difficult access; being exceedingly high, having a good graft, and strongly palisaded.' He had some three

hundred men with him, and to storm his position would have cost several hundreds of lives. A parley seems to have taken place, and Aston was persuaded to disarm by a Cromwellian band who had pursued him up the steep. At this point Cromwell ordered that they should all be put to the sword. It was done. Then came another order. '*Being in the heat of action*, I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the town; and I think that night they put to the sword about 2000 men; divers of the officers and soldiers being fled over the bridge into the other (the northern) part of the town.' Eighty of them took refuge in the steeple of St. Peter's church; and others in the towers at two of the gates. 'Whereon I ordered the church steeple to be fired, when one of them was heard to say, "God damn me, God confound me; I burn, I burn."' Of the eighty wretches in the steeple, fifty were slain and thirty perished in the flames. Cromwell notes with particular satisfaction what took place at St. Peter's church. 'It is remarkable,' he says, 'that these people had grown so insolent that the last Lord's Day before the storm, the protestants were thrust out of the great church called St. Peter's, and they had public Mass there; and in this very place, near 1000 of them were put to the sword fleeing thither for safety.' Of those in one of the towers, when they submitted, 'their officers were knocked on the head, and every tenth man of the soldiers killed, and the rest shipped for the Barbadoes. The soldiers in the other tower were all spared as to their lives only, and shipped likewise for the Bar-

badoes.' Even when time might have been expected to slake the sanguinary frenzy, officers in hiding were sought out and killed in cold blood. 'All the friars,' says Cromwell, 'were knocked on the head promiscuously but two. The enemy were about 3000 strong in the town. I believe we put to the sword the whole number of the defendants. I do not think thirty of the whole number escaped with their lives.' These 3000 were killed, with a loss of only sixty-four to those who killed them.

Such is the unvarnished tale of the Drogheda massacre. Its perpetrator himself felt at the first moment when 'the heat of action' had passed that it needed justification. 'Such actions,' he says, 'cannot but work remorse and regret,' unless there be satisfactory grounds for them, and the grounds that he alleges are two. One is revenge, and the other is policy. 'I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon those barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood; and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood in the future.' And then comes a theory of the divine tactics in these operations, which must be counted one of the most wonderful of all the recorded utterances of puritan theology. 'And now give me leave to say how it comes to pass that this work is wrought. It was set upon some of our hearts, that a great thing should be done, not by power or might, but by the spirit of God. And is it not so, clearly? That which caused your men to storm so courageously, it was the spirit of God, who gave your men courage and took it

away again; and gave the enemy courage, and took it away again; and gave your men courage again, and therewith this happy success. And therefore it is good that God alone have all the glory.'

That Cromwell's ruthless severity may have been justified by the strict letter of the military law of the time, is just possible. It may be true, as is contended, that this slaughter was no worse than some of the worst acts of those commanders in the Thirty Years' War whose names have ever since stood out in crimson letters on the page of European history as bywords of cruelty and savagery. That, after all, is but dubious extenuation. Though he may have had a technical right to give no quarter where a storm had followed the refusal to surrender, in England this right was only used by him once in the whole course of the war, and in his own defence of the massacre it was not upon military right that he chose to stand. The language used by Ludlow about it shows that even in the opinion of that time what was done needed explanation. 'The slaughter was continued all that day and the next,' he says, 'which *extraordinary severity*, I presume, was used to discourage others from making opposition.' This, as we have seen, was one of the two explanations given by Oliver himself. The general question, how far in such a case the end warrants the means, is a question of military and Christian ethics which it is not for us to discuss here; but we may remind the reader that not a few of the most barbarous enormities in human annals have been excused on the same ground, that in the long run

the gibbet, stake, torch, sword, and bullet are the truest mercy, sometimes to men's life here, sometimes to their souls hereafter. No less equivocal was Cromwell's second plea. The massacre, he says, was a righteous vengeance upon the wretches who had imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood in Ulster eight years before. Yet he must have known that of the 3000 men who were butchered at Drogheda, of the friars who were knocked on the head promiscuously, and of the officers who were killed in cold blood, not a single victim was likely to have had part or lot in the Ulster atrocities of 1641. More than one contemporary authority (including Ludlow and Clarendon) says the garrison was mostly English, and undoubtedly a certain contingent was English and protestant. The better opinion on the whole now seems to be that most of the slain men were Irish and catholic, but that they came from Kilkenny and other parts of the country far outside of Ulster, and so were 'in the highest degree unlikely to have had any hand in the Ulster massacre' of 1641.

Again, that the butchery at Drogheda did actually prevent in any marked degree further effusion of blood, is not at all clear. Cromwell remained in Ireland nine months longer, and the war was not extinguished for two years after his departure. The nine months of his sojourn in the country were a time of unrelaxing effort on one side, and obstinate resistance on the other. From Drogheda he marched south to Wexford. The garrison made a good stand for several days, but at last were compelled to parley.

A traitor during the parley yielded up the castle, and the Irish on the walls withdrew into the town. 'Which our men perceiving, ran violently upon the town with their ladder and stormed it. And when they were come into the market-place, the enemy making a stiff resistance, our forces broke them; and then put all to the sword that came in their way. I believe in all there was lost of the enemy not many less than 2000, and I believe not 20 of ours from first to last of the siege.' The town was sacked, and priests and friars were again knocked on the head, some of them in a protestant chapel which they had been audacious enough to turn into a Mass-house. For all this Cromwell was not directly responsible as he had been at Drogheda. 'Indeed it hath, not without cause, been set upon our hearts, that we, intending better to this place than so great a ruin, hoping the town might be of more use to you and your army, yet God would not have it so; but by an unexpected providence in His righteous justice, brought a just judgment upon them; causing them to become a prey to the soldier, who in their piracies had made preys of so many families, and now with their bloods to answer the cruelties which they had exercised upon the lives of divers poor protestants.'

A heavy hand was laid upon southern Ireland all through Cromwell's stay. Gowran was a strong castle, in command of Colonel Hamond, a Kentishman, a principal actor in the Kentish insurrection of 1648. He returned a resolute refusal to Cromwell's invitation to surrender (March 1650). The batteries were

opened, and after a short parley a treaty was made, the soldiers to have quarter, the officers to be treated as the victors might think fit. The next day the officers were shot, and a popish priest was hanged. In passing, we may ask in face of this hanging of chaplains and promiscuous knocking of friars on the head, what is the significance of Cromwell's challenge to produce 'an instance of one man since my coming to Ireland, not in arms, massacred, destroyed, or banished, concerning the massacre or destruction of whom justice hath not been done or endeavoured to be done.'[1]

The effect of the massacre of Drogheda was certainly transient. As we have seen, it did not frighten the commandant at Wexford, and the resistance that Cromwell encountered during the winter at Ross, Duncannon, Waterford, Kilkenny, and Clonmel was just such as might have been looked for, if the garrison at Drogheda had been treated like a defeated garrison at Bristol, Bridgewater, or Reading. At Clonmel, which came last, the resistance was most obdurate of all. The bloody lesson of Drogheda and Wexford had not been learned. 'They found in Clonmel, the stoutest enemy this army had ever met in Ireland; and there never was seen so hot a storm, of so long continuance, and so gallantly defended either in England or Ireland.' This was the work of Hugh O'Neill, the nephew of Owen Roe. Cromwell lost over two thousand men. The garrison, running short of ammunition, escaped in the night, and the

[1] Gardiner, i. 145. Firth's *Cromwell*, 260.

subsequent surrender of the town (May 10, 1650) was no more than a husk without a kernel.

The campaign made heavy demands upon the vigour of the parliamentary force. A considerable part of the army was described as fitter for an hospital than the field. Not one officer in forty escaped the dysentery which they called the disease of the country. Cromwell himself suffered a long attack of sickness. These distresses and difficulties much perplexed him. 'In the midst of our good successes,' he says, 'wherein the kindness and mercy of God hath appeared, the Lord in wisdom and for gracious ends best known to himself, hath interlaced some things which may give us cause of serious consideration what his mind therein may be. . . . You see how God mingles out the cup unto us. Indeed we are at this time a crazy company;—yet we live in his sight, and shall work the time that is appointed us, and shall rest after that in peace.'

His general policy is set out by Cromwell in a document of cardinal importance, and it sheds too much light upon his Irish policy to be passed over. The catholic prelates met at Clonmacnoise, and issued a manifesto that only lives in history for the sake of Cromwell's declaration in reply to it (Jan. 1650). This has been called by our great transcendental eulogist one of the most remarkable state papers ever published in Ireland since Strongbow or even since St. Patrick. Perhaps it is, for it combines in a unique degree profound ignorance of the Irish past with a profound miscalculation of the Irish future. 'I will

give you some wormwood to bite upon,' says Oliver, and so he does. Yet it is easy now to see that the prelates were in fact from the Irish point of view hitting the nail upon the head, while Oliver goes to work with a want of insight and knowledge that puts his Irish statesmanship far below Strafford's. The prelates warned their flocks that union in their own ranks was the only thing that could frustrate the parliamentary design to extirpate their religion, to massacre or banish the catholic inhabitants, and to plant the land with English colonies. This is exactly what Clement Walker, the puritan historian of independency, tells us. 'The independents in the parliament,' he says, 'insisted openly to have the papists of Ireland rooted out and their lands sold to adventurers.' Meanwhile, Oliver flies at them with extraordinary fire and energy of language, blazing with the polemic of the time. After a profuse bestowal of truculent compliments, deeply tinged with what in our days is known as the Orange hue, he comes to the practical matter in hand, but not until he has drawn one of the most daring of all the imaginary pictures that English statesmen have ever drawn, not, be it observed, of discontented colonists, but of catholic and native Ireland. 'Remember, ye hypocrites, Ireland was once united to England. Englishmen had good inheritances which many of them purchased with their money; they and their ancestors from you and your ancestors. . . . They lived peaceably and honestly among you. You had generally equal benefit of the protection of England with them; and equal justice from the laws

—saving what was necessary for the state, upon reasons of state, to put upon some few people apt to rebel upon the instigation of such as you. You broke the union. You, unprovoked, put the English to the most unheard of, and most barbarous massacre . . . that ever the sun beheld.'

As if Cromwell had not stood by the side of Pym in his denunciations of Strafford in all their excess and all their ignorance of Irish conditions, precisely for systematic violation of English law and the spirit of it throughout his long government of Ireland. As if Clare's famous sentence at the Union a hundred and fifty years later, about confiscation being the common title, and the English settlement being hemmed in on every side by the old inhabitants brooding over their discontents in sullen indignation, were at any time more true of Ireland than in these halcyon days of Cromwell's imagination. As if what he calls the equal benefit of the protection of England had meant anything but fraud, chicane, plunder, neglect and oppression, ending in that smouldering rage, misery, and despair which Cromwell so ludicrously describes as the deep peace and union of a tranquil sheepfold, only disturbed by the ravening greed of the priestly wolves of Rome.

As for religion, after some thin and heated quibbling about the word 'extirpate,' he lets them know with all plainness what he means to do. 'I shall not, where I have power, and the Lord is pleased to bless me, suffer the exercise of the Mass. Nor suffer you that are Papists, where I can find you seducing the

people, or by any overt act violating the laws established. As for the people, what thoughts in the matter of religion they have in their own breasts, I cannot reach; but shall think it my duty, if they walk honestly and peaceably, not to cause them in the least to suffer for the same.' To pretend that he was not 'meddling with any man's conscience' when he prohibited the central rite of the catholics, and all the ministrations by the clergy on those occasions of life where conscience under awful penalties demanded them, was as idle as if the catholics had pretended that they did not meddle with conscience if they forbade the possession or use of the Bible, or hunted puritan preachers out of all the pulpits.

'We come,' he proceeds, 'by the assistance of God to hold forth and maintain the lustre and glory of English liberty in a nation where we have an undoubted right to do it; wherein the people of Ireland (if they listen not to such seducers as you are) may equally participate in all benefits; to use liberty and fortune equally with Englishmen if they keep out of arms.' It is true enough that the military conquest of Ireland was an indispensable preliminary to any healing policy. Nor in the prostrate and worn-out condition of Ireland after ten years of such confusion as has not often been seen on our planet, could military conquest though tedious be difficult. If the words just quoted were to have any meaning, Cromwell's policy, after the necessary subjugation of the country, ought to have been to see that the inhabitants of the country should enjoy both their religion and

their lands in peace. If he had been strong enough and enlightened enough to try such a policy as this, there might have been a Cromwellian settlement indeed. As it was, the stern and haughty assurances with which he wound up his declaration 'for the Undeceiving of Deluded and Seduced People' were to receive a dreadful interpretation, and in this lies the historic pith of the whole transaction.

The Long Parliament deliberately contemplated executions on so merciless a scale that it was not even practicable. But many hundreds were put to death. The same parliament was originally responsible for the removal of the population, not on so wholesale a scale as is sometimes supposed, but still enormous. All this Cromwell sanctioned if he did not initiate. Confiscation of the land proceeded over a vast area. Immense tracts were handed over to the adventurers who had advanced money to the government for the purposes of the war, and immense tracts to the Cromwellian soldiery in discharge of arrears of pay. It is estimated that two-thirds of the land changed hands. The old proprietors were transplanted with every circumstance of misery to the province west of the Shannon, to the wasted and desperate wilds of Connaught. Between thirty and forty thousand of the Irish were permitted to go to foreign countries, where they took service in the armies of Spain, France, Poland. When Jamaica was taken from Spain in 1655, Oliver, ardent for its successful plantation, requested Henry Cromwell, then in Ireland, to engage 1500 soldiers to settle, and to send a thousand

Irishwomen with them; and we know from Thurloe that ships were made ready for the transportation of the boys and girls whom Henry was forcibly collecting. Whether the design was carried further we do not know. Strange to say, the massacre in the valleys of Piedmont in 1655 increased the bitterness of the Dublin government and of the protestant generals towards the unhappy Irish. Fleetwood says:—'The officers of the army here are very sensible of the horrid cruelties in the massacre of the poor protestants in the Duke of Savoy's dominions. . . . It was less strange to us when we heard that the insatiable Irish had a hand in that bloodshed.' The rigours of transplantation waxed more severe.

Of all these doings in Cromwell's Irish chapter, each of us may say what he will. Yet to every one it will at least be intelligible how his name has come to be hated in the tenacious heart of Ireland. What is called his settlement aggravated Irish misery to a degree that cannot be measured, and before the end of a single generation events at Limerick and the Boyne showed how hollow and ineffectual, as well as how mischievous, the Cromwellian settlement had been. Strafford too had aimed at the incorporation of Ireland with England, at plantation by English colonists, and at religious uniformity within a united realm. But Strafford had a grasp of the complications of social conditions in Ireland to which Cromwell could not pretend. He knew the need of time and management. He knew the need of curbing the English lords. A puritan armed with a musket and the Old Testament,

attempting to reconstruct the foundations of a community mainly catholic, was sure to end in clumsy failure, and to this clumsy failure no appreciation of Oliver's greatness should blind rational men. With him incorporation of Ireland in a united kingdom meant the incorporation of the British colony, just as a southern state was a member of the American union, to the exclusion of the serf population. One partial glimpse into the root of the matter he unmistakably had. 'These poor people,' he said (Dec. 1649), 'have been accustomed to as much injustice, tyranny, and oppression from their landlords, the great men, and those who should have done them right, as any people in that which we call Christendom. Sir, if justice were freely and impartially administered here, the foregoing darkness and corruption would make it look so much the more glorious and beautiful, and draw more hearts after it.' This was Oliver's single glimpse of the main secret of the everlasting Irish question; it came to nothing, and no other English ruler had even so much as this for many generations afterwards.

CHAPTER III.

IN SCOTLAND.

It was the turn of Scotland next. There the Commonwealth of England was wholly without friends. Religious sentiment and national sentiment, so far as in that country they can be conceived apart, combined against a government that in the first place sprang from the triumphs of sectaries over presbyterians, and the violent slaying of a lawful Scottish king; and, in the second place, had definitely substituted a principle of toleration for the milk of the covenanted word. Cromwell's accommodation after Preston, politic as it was at the moment, had none of the elements of stability. The pure royalist, the pure covenanter, the men who were both royalists and fervid presbyterians, those who had gone with Montrose, those who went with Argyle, the Engagers whom Cromwell had routed at Preston, Whiggamores, nobles and clergy, all abhorred the new English system which dispelled at the same time both golden dreams of a presbyterian king ruling over a presbyterian people, and constitutional visions of the sway of the legitimate line. The spirit of intestine faction was red-hot, but the wiser Scots knew by instinct that the struggle before

them was at bottom as much a struggle for independent national existence, as it had been in the days of Wallace or Bruce. Equally the statesmen of the Commonwealth felt the impossibility of establishing their own rule over the host of malcontents in England, until they had suppressed a hostile Scotland. The alliance between the two neighbouring nations which ten years before had arisen from religious feeling in one and military needs in the other, had now by slow stages become a struggle for national predominance and a great consolidated State. The proclamation of Charles II. at Edinburgh, the long negotiations with him in Holland, his surrender to the inexorable demand that he should censure his father for resisting the Reformation, and his mother for being an idolatress, that he should himself turn covenanter, and finally, his arrival on the soil of Scotland, all showed that no time was to be lost if the union of the kingdoms was to be saved.

An express messenger was sent to Ireland by the Council of State in March (1650), to let Cromwell know that affairs were urgent, and that they desired his presence and assistance. He did not arrive until the first of June. He was saluted with joyful acclamation on every side, from the magnanimous Fairfax down to the multitudes that thronged the approaches to Westminster. Both parliament and the city gave him formal thanks for his famous services in Ireland; which, being added to the laurels of his English victories, 'crowned him in the opinion of all the world for one of the wisest and most accomplished

leaders among the present and past generations.' As against a popish Ireland, all English parties were united.

It was now that Fairfax, the brave and skilful commander, but too wanting in the sovereign qualities of decision and initiative to guide the counsels of a revolution, disappeared from conspicuous place. While Cromwell was in Ireland, Fairfax had still retained the office of Lord-General, and Cromwell himself was now undoubtedly sincere in his urgency that the old arrangement should continue. Among other reasons, the presence of Fairfax was a satisfaction to that presbyterian interest against whose active enmity the Commonwealth could hardly stand. Fairfax had always shown himself a man of scruple. After a single attendance he had absented himself from the trial of the king, and in the same spirit of scruple he refused the command of the army destined for the invasion of Scotland, on the ground that invasion would be a breach of the Solemn League and Covenant. Human probabilities, he said, are not sufficient ground to make war upon a neighbour nation. The point may seem minute in modern eyes; but in Fairfax at least moral punctilio had no association with disloyalty either to his powerful comrade or to the Commonwealth. Cromwell was at once (June 26) appointed to be Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief.

The Scottish case was essentially different from the case of Ireland, and the national quarrel was definitely described by Oliver To Ireland he had gone to exact

vengeance, to restore some sort of framework to a society shattered even to dissolution, and to wage war against the practice of a hated creed. Very different from his truculence against Irish prelates was his earnest appeal to the General Assembly in Scotland. 'I beseech you,' he said,—enjoining a lesson that of all lessons mankind are at all times least willing to learn,—'I beseech you, think it possible you may be mistaken.' He protested that they wished well to the honest people of Scotland as to their own souls, 'it being no part of our business to hinder any of them from worshipping God in that way they are satisfied in their conscience by the word of God they ought.' It was the political incoherencies of the Scots that forced the war upon England. They pretended, he told them, that to impose a king upon England was the cause of God, and the satisfaction of God's people in both countries. Yet this king, who now professed to submit to the covenant, had at that very moment a popish army fighting under his orders in Ireland.

The political exposure was unanswerable, and Cromwell spared no trouble to bring it home to the minds of the godly. But the clergy hindered the passage of these things to the hearts of those to whom he intended them—a deceived clergy, 'meddling with worldly policies and mixtures of earthly power, to set up that which they call the Kingdom of Christ.' Theirs was no Kingdom of Christ, and if it were, no such means as worldly policy would be effectual to set it up: it is the sword of the Spirit alone that is

powerful for the setting up of that Kingdom. This mystic spirituality, ever the indwelling essence of Cromwell's faith, struck no response in the dour ecclesiastics to whom he was speaking. However all this might be, the battle must be fought. To have a king imposed by Scotland would be better, they believed, than one imposed by Ireland, but if malignants were destined to win, then it were better to have a restoration by English cavaliers than by Scottish presbyters, inflamed by spiritual pride and sodden in theological arrogance. At a critical hour six years later, Cromwell deprecated despondency, and the argument was as good now as then. 'We are Englishmen; that is one good fact. And if God give a nation valour and courage, it is honour and a mercy.' It was upon this national valour and courage that he now counted, and the crowning mercy of Worcester in the autumn of 1651 justified him. But many sombre episodes intervened.

Cromwell (July 22) crossed the northern border with a force of some sixteen thousand men. For five weeks, until the end of August, he was involved in a series of manœuvres, extremely complicated in detail, and turning on a fruitless attempt to draw the Scots out of a strong and skilfully entrenched position in Edinburgh, and to force them to an engagement in the open. The general was David Leslie, who six years ago had rendered such valiant and timely service on the day of Marston Moor. He knew that time, weather, and scarcity of supplies must wear Cromwell out and compel him to recross the border, and Leslie's

skill and steadfastness, in the absence of any of those rapid and energetic blows that usually marked Cromwell's operations, ended in complete success. 'There is an impossibility,' said Fleetwood, 'in our forcing them to fight—the passes being so many and so great that as soon as we go on the one side, they go over on the other.' The English force retreated to Dunbar, a shattered, hungry, discouraged host, some ten or eleven thousand in number. Leslie with a force twice as numerous, bent southward to the inland hills that overlook Dunbar. There Cromwell, encamped between the town and the Doon hill, was effectually blocked. The Scots were in high spirits at thus cutting him off from Berwick. 'In their presumption and arrogance they had disposed of us and of their business, in sufficient revenge and wrath towards our persons; and had swallowed up the poor interest of England; believing that their army and their king would have marched to London without any interruption.' This was indeed the issue—a king restored by the ultras of the Scottish church, with a new struggle in England between malignants and presbyterians to follow after. 'We lay very near him,' says Oliver, 'being sensible of our disadvantage, having some weakness of flesh, but yet consolation and support from the Lord himself to our poor weak faith: That because of their numbers, because of their advantage, because of their confidence, because of our weakness, because of our strait, we were in the Mount, and in the Mount the Lord would be seen; and that he would find a way of deliverance and salvation for us; and indeed we had our consolations

and our hopes.' This was written after the event; but a note written on September 2 to the governor of Newcastle shows with even more reality into how desperate a position he felt that Leslie's generalship had driven him. 'We are upon an engagement very difficult. The enemy hath blocked up our way at the Pass at Copperspath, through which we cannot get without almost a miracle. He lieth so upon the hills, that we know not how to come that way without difficulty; and our lying here daily consumeth our men, who fall sick beyond imagination. . . . Whatever becomes of us, it will be well for you to get what forces you can together; and the South to help what they can. The business nearly concerneth all good people. If your forces had been here in a readiness to have fallen upon the back of Copperspath, it might have occasioned supplies to have come to us. . . . All shall work for good. Our spirits are comfortable, praised be the Lord—though our present condition be as it is.' History possesses no finer picture of the fortitude of the man of action, with eyes courageously open to dark facts closing round him, yet with alacrity, vigilance, and a kind of cheerful hope, taking thought for every detail of the business of the day.

Whether Leslie's idea was to allow the English to retreat until they were engaged in the pass, and then to fall upon them in the rear; or to drive them slowly across the border in humiliation and disgrace, we cannot tell. No more can we tell for certain whether Cromwell still held to his first project of

fortifying Dunbar, or intended at all costs to cut his way through. Leslie had naturally made up his mind that the English must either move or surrender, and if he remained on the heights, victory was his. Unluckily for him, he was forced from his resolve, either by want of water, provisions, and shelter for his force; or else by the impatience of his committee, mainly ministers, who were wearied of his triumphant Fabian strategy, and could not restrain their exultation at the sight of the hated sectaries lying entrapped at their feet, shut in between the sea at their back and a force twice as strong as themselves in front, with another force cutting them off from the south in a position that ten men could hold against forty. Their minds were full of Saul, Amalekites, Moabites, the fords of Jordan, and all the rest of it, just as Oliver was full of the Mount of the Lord, taking care, however, never to let texts do duty for tactics. In an evil moment on the morning of September 2 the Scots began to descend the hill and to extend themselves on the ledge of a marshy glen at the foot, with intention to attack. Cromwell walking about with Lambert, with a watchful eye for the hills, discerned the unexpected motions. 'I told the Major-General,' says Cromwell, 'I thought it did give us an opportunity and advantage to attempt upon the enemy. To which he immediately replied, that he had thought to have said the same thing to me. So that it pleased the Lord to set this apprehension upon both of our hearts at the instant.' They called for Monk; then going to their quarters at night they

all held a council of war, and explained their plans to some of the colonels; these cheerfully concurred. Leslie's move must mean either an immediate attack, or a closer blockade; in either case, the only chance for the English was to be first to engage. They determined to fall on at daybreak, though as it happened the actual battle did not open before six (Sept. 3). The weather was wet and stormy. The voice of prayer and preaching sounding through the night watches showed the piety and confirmed the confidence of the English troopers. The Scots sought shelter behind the shocks of corn against the wind and rain from the sea, instead of obeying the orders to stand to their arms. 'It was our own laziness,' said Leslie; 'I take God to witness that we might have as easily beaten them as we did James Graham at Philiphaugh, if the officers had stayed by their troops and regiments.'

The rout of Dunbar has been described by Carlyle, in one of the famous masterpieces of modern letters, with a force of imagination, a moral depth, a poetic beauty, more than atoning for the perplexing humours and whimsical philosophies that mar this fine biography. It is wise for others not to attempt to turn into poetry the prose of politics and war. The English and the Scots faced one another across a brook with steep banks, and narrow fords at more than one place. The first operation was the almost uncontested passage of Cromwell's forces across the stream before the Scots were ready to resist them. The two armies, gradually drawn up in order of battle, engaged on the

Berwick side of the burn, the English facing the hill, and the Scots facing the sea.[1] Then the battle began.

It opened with a cannonade from the English guns, followed by a charge of horse under Lambert. The enemy were in a good position, had the advantage of guns and foot against Lambert's horse, and at first had the best of it in the struggle. Before the English foot could come up, Cromwell says, 'the enemy made a gallant resistance, and there was a very hot dispute at swords' point between our horse and theirs.' Then the first line of foot came up, and 'after they had discharged their duty (being overpowered with the enemy) received some repulse which they soon recovered. For my own regiment did come seasonably in, and at the push of pike did repel the stoutest regiment the enemy had there, which proved a great amazement to the residue of their foot. The horse in the meantime did with a great deal of courage and spirit beat back all opposition; charging through the bodies of the enemy's horse and of their foot; who were after the first repulse given, made by the Lord of Hosts as stubble to their swords. The best of the enemy's horse being broken through and through in less than an hour's dispute, their whole army being put

[1] The old story was that the real battle consisted in the forced passage of the stream, but Mr. Firth seems to establish the version above (*Transactions of Historical Society*, November 16, 1899). Mr. Firth quotes the tale of a servant of Sir Arthur Haselrig's, who was present at the battle, how Cromwell 'rid all the night before through the several regiments by torchlight, upon a little Scots nag, biting his lip till the blood ran down his chin without his perceiving it, his thoughts being busily employed to be ready for the action now at hand.'

into confusion, it became a total rout, our men having the chase and execution of them near eight miles.'

Such is the story of this memorable hour's fight as told by the victor. Rushworth, then Cromwell's secretary, is still more summary. 'About twilight the General advanced with the army, and charged them both in the valley and on the hill. The battle was very fierce for the time; one part of their battalion stood very stiffly to it, but the rest was presently routed. I never beheld a more terrible charge of foot than was given by our army; our foot alone making the Scots foot give ground for three quarters of a mile together.' Whether the business was finally done by Lambert's second charge of horse after his first repulse, or whether Cromwell turned the day by a flank movement of his own, the authorities do not enable us to settle. The best of them says this:—'The day broke, and we in disorder, and the Major-General (Lambert) awanting, being ordering the guns. The General was impatient; the Scots a-preparing to make the attempt upon us, sounding a trumpet, but soon desisted. At last the Major-General came, and ordered Packer, major to the General's regiment, Gough's and our two foot regiments, to march about Roxburgh House towards the sea, and so to fall upon the enemy's flank, which was done with a great deal of resolution; and one of the Scots brigades of foot would not yield, though at push of pike and butt-end of musket, until a troop of our horse charged from one end to another of them, and so left them at the mercy of the foot. The General himself comes in the

rear of our regiment, and commands to incline to the left; that was to take more ground, to be clear of all bodies. And we did so, and horse and foot were engaged all over the field; and the Scots all in confusion. And the sun appearing upon the sea, I heard Noll say, "Now let God arise, and his enemies shall be scattered"; and he following us as we slowly marched, I heard him say, "I profess they run!" and then was the Scots army all in disorder and running, both right wing and left and main battle. They routed one another, after we had done their work on their right wing; and we coming up to the top of the hill with the straggling parties that had been engaged, kept them from bodying.'

Cromwell's gazette was peculiar, perhaps not without a moral for later days. 'Both your chief commanders and others in their several places, and soldiers also were acted (actuated) with as much courage as ever hath been seen in any action since this war. I know they look not to be named, and therefore I forbear particulars.' Nor is a word said about the precise part taken by himself. An extraordinary fact about the drove of Dunbar is that though the battle was so fierce, at such close quarters, and lasted more than an hour, yet according to the highest account the English did not lose thirty men; as Oliver says in another place, not even twenty. They killed three thousand, and took ten thousand prisoners.[1]

[1] Mr. Firth explains this as due to the fact that the Scottish infantry had not in most cases got their matches alight, and so could do no execution worth mentioning with their fire-arms.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM DUNBAR TO WORCESTER.

For nearly a year after the victory at Dunbar Cromwell remained in Scotland, and for five months of the year with short intervals followed by relapses, he suffered from an illness from which he thought he should die. On the day after Dunbar he wrote to his wife:—'My weak faith hath been upheld. I have been in my inward man marvellously supported, though I assure thee, I grow an old man, and feel infirmities of age marvellously stealing upon me. Would my corruptions did as fast decrease.' He was only fifty years old, but for the last eight years his labours, hardships, privations, and anxieties had been incessant and severe. The winter in Ireland had brought on a long and sharp attack of feverish ague. The climate of Scotland agreed with him no better. The baffled marches and counter-marches that preceded Dunbar, in dreadful weather and along miry ways, may well have depressed his vital energies. His friends in London took alarm (Feb. 1651) and parliament despatched two physicians from London to see him, and even made an order allowing him to

return into England for change of air. Of this unsolicited permission he did not avail himself.

Both the political and the military operations in Scotland between Dunbar and Worcester are as intricate a tangle as any in Cromwell's career. The student who unravels them in detail may easily convince us what different results might have followed, if military tactics had been other than they were, or if religious quarrels had been less vivid and less stubborn. The general outline is fairly plain. As Ranke says, the struggle was not between two ordinary armies, but two politico-religious sects. On both sides they professed to be zealous protestants. On both sides they professed their conviction of the immediate intervention of Providence in their affairs. On both sides a savoury text made an unanswerable argument, and English and Scots in the seventeenth century of the Christian era found their morals and their politics in the tribal warfare of the Hebrews of the old dispensation. The English likened themselves to Israel against Benjamin; and then to Joshua against the Canaanites. The Scots repaid in the same scriptural coin. The quarrel was whether they should have a king or not, and whether there should be a ruling church or not. The rout of Leslie at Dunbar had thrown the second of these issues into a secondary place.

In vain did Cromwell, as his fashion was, appeal to the testimony of results. He could not comprehend how men worshipping the God of Israel, and thinking themselves the chosen people, could so

perversely ignore the moral of Dunbar, and the yet more eminent witness of the Lord against the family of Charles for blood-guiltiness. The churchmen haughtily replied, they had not learned to hang the equity of their cause upon events. 'Events,' retorted Oliver, with a scorn more fervid than their own; 'what blindness on your eyes to all those marvellous dispensations lately wrought in England. But did you not solemnly appeal and pray? Did we not do so too? And ought not you and we to think with fear and trembling of the hand of the great God in this mighty and strange appearance of his, instead of slightly calling it "an event"? Were not both your and our expectations renewed from time to time, whilst we waited upon God, to see which way he would manifest himself upon our appeals? And shall we after all these our prayers, fastings, tears, expectations, and solemn appeals, call these bare "events"? The Lord pity you.'

After bitter controversies that propagated themselves in Scotland for generations to come, after all the strife between Remonstrants, Resolutioners, and Protesters, and after a victory by Lambert over the zealots of the west, Scottish policy underwent a marked reaction. Argyle, the shifty and astute opportunist, who had attempted to combine fierce covenanters with moderate royalists, lost his game. The fanatical clergy had been brought down from the mastery which they had so arrogantly abused. The nobles and gentry regained their ascendancy. The king found a large force at last in line upon his side,

and saw a chance of throwing off the yoke of his presbyterian tyrants. All the violent and confused issues, political and religious, had by the middle of 1651 become simplified into the one question of a royalist restoration to the throne of the two kingdoms.

The head-quarters of the Scots were at Stirling, and here David Leslie repeated the tactics that had been so triumphant at Edinburgh. Well entrenched within a region of marsh and moorland, he baffled all Oliver's attempts to dislodge him or to open the way to Stirling. The English invaders were again to be steadily wearied out. Cromwell says, 'We were gone as far as we could in our counsel and action, and we did say to one another, we knew not what to do.' The enemy was at his 'old lock,' and with abundant supplies from the north. 'It is our business still to wait upon God, to show us our way how to deal with this subtle enemy, which I hope he will.' Meanwhile, like the diligent man of business that every good general must be, he sends to the Council of State for more arms, more spades and tools, more saddles and provisions, and more men, especially volunteers rather than pressed men. His position was not so critical as on the eve of Dunbar, but it was vexatious. There was always the risk of the Scots retiring in detached parties to the Highlands and so prolonging the war. On the other hand, if he did not succeed in dislodging the king from Stirling, he must face another winter with all the difficulties of climate and health for his soldiers, and all the expense of

English treasure for the government at Whitehall. For many weeks he had been revolving plans for outflanking Stirling by an expedition through Fife, and cutting the king off from his northern resources. In this plan also there was the risk that a march in force northward left the road to England open, if the Scots in their desperation and fear and inevitable necessity should try what they could do in this way. In July Cromwell came at length to a decision. He despatched Lambert with four thousand men across the Forth to the shores of Fife, and after Lambert had overcome the stout resistance of a force of Scots of about equal numbers at Inverkeithing (July 20), Cromwell transported the main body of his army on to the same ground, and the whole force passing Stirling on the left advanced north as far as Perth. Here Cromwell arrived on August 1, and the city was surrendered to him on the following day. This move placed the king and his force in the desperate dilemma that had been foreseen. Their supplies would be cut off, their men were beginning to desert, and the English were ready to close. Their only choice lay between a hopeless engagement in the open about Stirling, and a march to the south. 'We must,' said one of them, 'either starve, disband, or go with a handful of men into England. This last seems to be the least ill, yet it appears very desperate.' That was the way they chose: they started forth (July 31) for the invasion of England. Cromwell, hearing the momentous news, acted with even more than his usual swiftness, and having taken Perth on August 2, was

back again at Leith two days later, and off from Leith in pursuit two days after his arrival there. The chase lasted a month. Charles and 20,000 Scots took the western road, as Hamilton had done in 1648. England was, in Cromwell's phrase, much more unsteady in Hamilton's time than now, and the Scots tramped south from Carlisle to Worcester without any signs of that eager rising against the Commonwealth on which they had professed to count. They found themselves foreigners among stolid and scowling natives. The Council of State responded to Cromwell's appeal with extraordinary vigilance, forethought, and energy. They despatched letters to the militia commissioners over England, urging them to collect forces and to have them in the right places. They dwelt on the king's mistaken calculations, how the counties, instead of assisting him everywhere with the cheerfulness on which he was reckoning, had united against him; and how, after all his long march, scarcely anybody joined him, 'except such whose other crimes seek shelter there, by the addition of that one more.' The Lord-General making his way south in hard marches by Berwick, York, Nottingham, was forced to leave not a few of his veterans on the way, worn out by sickness and the hardships of the last winter's campaign in Scotland. These the Council directed should be specially refreshed and tended.

Cromwell's march from Perth to Worcester, and the combinations incident to it, have excited the warm admiration of the military critics of our own time. The precision of his operations would be deemed

remarkable even in the days of the telegraph, and their success testifies to Cromwell's extraordinary sureness in all that concerned the movements of horse, as well as to the extraordinary military talent of Lambert, on which he knew that he could safely reckon. Harrison who had instantly started after the Scottish invaders upon their left flank, and Lambert whom Cromwell ordered to hang upon their rear, effected a junction on August 13. Cromwell marching steadily on a line to the east, and receiving recruits as he advanced (from Fairfax in Yorkshire among others), came up with Lambert's column on August 24. Fleetwood joined them with the forces of militia newly collected in the south. Thus three separate corps, starting from three different bases and marching at long distances from one another, converged at the right point, and four days later the whole army some 30,000 strong lay around Worcester. 'Not Napoleon, not Moltke, could have done better' (Hönig, III. p. 136). The energy of the Council of State, the skill of Lambert and Harrison, and above all the staunch aversion of the population from the invaders, had hardly less to do with the result than the strategy of Oliver.

It was indispensable that Cromwell's force should be able to operate at once on both banks of the Severn. Fleetwood succeeded in crossing Upton Bridge from the left bank to the right, seven miles below Worcester, thus securing access to both banks. About midway between Worcester and Upton, the tributary Teme flows into the Severn, and the decisive

element in the struggle consisted in laying two bridges of boats, one across the Teme, and the other across the Severn, both of them close to the junction of the broader stream with the less. This was the work of the afternoon of September 3, the anniversary of Dunbar, and it became possible for the Cromwellians to work freely with a concentrated force on either left bank or right. The battle was opened by Fleetwood after he had transported one of his wings by the bridge of boats over the Teme, and the other by Powick Bridge, a short distance up the stream on the left. As soon as Fleetwood advanced to the attack, the Scots on the right bank of the Severn offered a strong resistance. Cromwell passed a mixed force of horse and foot over his Severn bridge to the relief of Fleetwood. Together they beat the enemy from hedge to hedge, till they chased him into Worcester. The scene then changed to the left bank. Charles, from the cathedral tower observing that Cromwell's main force was engaged in the pursuit of the Scots between the Teme and the city, drew all his men together and sallied out on the eastern side. Here they pressed as hard as they could upon the reserve that Cromwell had left behind him before joining Fleetwood. He now in all haste recrossed the Severn, and a furious engagement followed, lasting for three hours at close quarters and often at push of pike and from defence to defence. The end was the 'total defeat and ruin of the enemy's army; and a possession of the town, our men entering at the enemy's heels and fighting with them in the streets with very great

courage.' The Scots fought with desperate tenacity. The carnage was what it always is in street warfare. Some three thousand men lay dead; twice or even three times as many were taken prisoners, including most of the men of high station; Charles was a fugitive. Not many of the Scots ever saw their homes again.

Such was the battle of Worcester, as stiff a contest, says the victor, as ever I have seen. It was Oliver's last battle, the 'Crowning Mercy.' In what sense did this great military event deserve so high a title? It has been said, that as a military commander Cromwell's special work was not the overthrow of Charles I., but the re-arrangement of the relations of the three kingdoms. Such a distinction is arbitrary or paradoxical. Neither at Naseby and Preston, nor at Dunbar and Worcester, was any indelible stamp impressed upon the institutions of the realm; no real incorporation of Ireland and Scotland took place or was then possible. Here as elsewhere, what Cromwell's military genius and persistency secured by the subjugation alike of king and kingdoms, was that the waves of anarchy should not roll over the work, and that enough of the conditions of unity and order should be preserved to ensure national safety and progress when affairs had returned to their normal course. In Ireland this provisional task was so ill comprehended as to darken all the future. In Scotland its immediate and positive results were transient, but there at least no barriers arose against happier relations in time to come.

CHAPTER V.

CIVIL PROBLEMS AND THE SOLDIER.

When God, said Milton, has given victory to the cause, 'then comes the task to those worthies which are the soul of that enterprise, to be sweated and laboured out amidst the throng and noises of vulgar and irrational men.' Often in later days Cromwell used to declare that after the triumph of the cause at Worcester, he would fain have withdrawn from prominence and power. These sighs of fatigue in strong men are often sincere and always vain. Outer circumstance prevents withdrawal, and the inspiring daimon of the mind within prevents it. This was the climax of his glory. Nine years had gone since conscience, duty, his country, the cause of civil freedom, the cause of sacred truth and of the divine purpose, had all, as he believed, summoned him to arms. With miraculous constancy victory had crowned his standards. Unlike Condé, or Turenne, or almost any general that has ever lived, he had in all these years of incessant warfare never suffered a defeat. The rustic captain of horse was Lord-General of the army that he had brought to be the best-disciplined force in Europe. It was now to be seen whether the same

genius and the same fortune would mark his handling of civil affairs and the ship of state plunging among the breakers. It was certain that he would be as active and indefatigable in peace as he had proved himself in war; that energy would never fail, even if depth of counsel often failed; that strenuous watchfulness would never relax, even though calculations went again and again amiss; that it would still be true of him to the end, that 'he was a strong man, and in the deep perils of war, in the high places of the field, hope shone in him like a pillar of fire when it had gone out in all others.' A spirit of confident hope, and the halo of past success—these are two of the manifold secrets of a great man's power, and a third is a certain moral unity that impresses him on others as a living whole. Cromwell possessed all three. Whether he had the other gifts of a wise ruler in a desperate pass, only time could show.

The victorious general had a triumphal return. The parliament sent five of its most distinguished members to greet him on his march, voted him a grant of £4000 a year in addition to £2500 voted the year before, and they gave him Hampton Court as a country residence. He entered the metropolis, accompanied not only by the principal officers of the army, but by the Speaker, the Council of State, the Lord Mayor, the aldermen and sheriffs, and many thousand other persons of quality, while an immense multitude received the conqueror of Ireland and Scotland with volleys of musketry and loud rejoicing. In the midst of acclamations that Cromwell took for

no more than they were worth, it was observed that he bore himself with great affability and seeming humility. With a touch of the irony that was rare in him, but can never be wholly absent in any that meddle with affairs of politics and party, he remarked that there would have been a still mightier crowd to see him hanged. Whenever Worcester was talked of, he never spoke of himself, but talked of the gallantry of his comrades, and gave the glory to God. Yet there were those who said, 'This man will make himself our king,' and in days to come his present modesty was set down to craft. For it is one of the elements in the poverty of human nature that as soon as people see a leader knowing how to calculate, they slavishly assume that the aim of his calculations can be nothing else than his own interest. Cromwell's moderation was in truth the natural bearing of a man massive in simplicity, purged of self, and who knew far too well how many circumstances work together for the unfolding of great events, to dream of gathering all the credit to a single agent.

Bacon in a single pithy sentence had, in 1606, foreshadowed the whole policy of the Commonwealth in 1650. This kingdom of England, he told the House of Commons, 'having Scotland united, Ireland reduced, the sea provinces of the Low Countries contracted, and shipping maintained, is one of the greatest monarchies in forces truly esteemed that hath been in the world.' The Commonwealth on Cromwell's return from the 'Crowning Mercy' had lasted for two years and a half (Feb. 1, 1649—Sept. 1651). During this

period its existence had been saved mainly by Cromwell's victorious suppression of its foes in Ireland and in Scotland, and partly by circumstances in France and Spain that hindered either of the two great monarchies of Western Europe from armed intervention on behalf of monarchy in England. Its protestantism had helped to shut out the fallen sovereignty from the active sympathy of the sacred circle of catholic kings. Cromwell's military success in the outlying kingdoms was matched by corresponding progress achieved through the energy and policy of the civil government at Westminster. At Christmas 1650, or less than two years after the execution of Charles, an ambassador from the King of Spain was received in audience by the parliament, and presented his credentials to the Speaker. France, torn by intestine discord and with a more complex game to play, was slower, but in the winter of 1652 the Commonwealth was duly recognised by the government of Louis XIV., the nephew (by marriage) of the king whom the leaders of the Commonwealth had slain.

Less than justice has usually been done to the bold and skilful exertions by which the Council of State had made the friendship of England an object of keen desire both to France and to Spain. The creation of the navy, by which Blake and other of the amphibious sea-generals won some of the proudest victories in all the annals of English seamanship, was not less striking and hardly less momentous than the creation of the army of the New Model. For the first time, says Ranke, since the days of the Plantagenets, an English

fleet was seen (1651) in the Mediterranean, and Blake, who had never been on the quarter-deck of a man-of-war until he was fifty, was already only second in renown to Oliver himself. The task of maritime organization was carried through by the vigour, insight, and administrative talents of Vane and the other men of the parliament, who are now so often far too summarily despatched as mere egotists and pedants. By the time that Cromwell had effected the subjugation of Ireland which Ireton, Ludlow, and Fleetwood completed, and the subjugation of Scotland which Monk and Deane completed, he found that the Council of State had been as active in suppressing the piratical civil war waged by Rupert at sea, as he himself had been with his iron veterans on land. What was more, they had opened a momentous chapter of maritime and commercial policy. Ill-will had sprung up early between the Dutch and English republics, partly from the dynastic relations between the house of Stuart and the house of Orange, partly from repugnance in Holland to the shedding of the blood of King Charles, and most of all from the keen instincts of commercial rivalry. It has been justly remarked as extraordinary that the two republics, threatened both of them by Stuart interests, by catholic interests, and by France, should now for the first time make war on each other. In the days of their struggle with Spain, the Dutch did their best to persuade Queen Elizabeth to accept their allegiance and to incorporate the United Provinces in the English realm. Now, it was statesmen of the English Commonwealth who dreamed of

adding the Dutch republic to the Union of England, Scotland and Ireland. Of this dream in shape so definite nothing could come, and even minor projects of friendship were not discussed without a degree of friction that speedily passed into downright animosity. To cripple the naval power of Holland would at once satisfy the naval pride of the new Commonwealth, remove a source of military danger, and exalt the maritime strength and the commercial greatness of England. The Navigation Act of 1651 was passed, the one durable monument of republican legislation. By this famous measure goods were only to be admitted into England either in English ships, or else in ships of the country to which the goods belonged. Whatever else came of it, and its effects both direct and indirect were deep and far-reaching for many generations to come, the Navigation Act made a breach in the Dutch monopoly of the world's carrying trade. An unfriendly Holland seemed as direct a peril as the enmity of France or Spain, and before long it was perceived how easily a combination between Holland and Denmark, by closing the gates of the Baltic, might exclude England from free access to the tar, cordage, and the other prime requisites for the building and rigging of her ships. The blow at the Dutch trade monopoly was a fresh irritant to Dutch pride, already embittered by the English claim to supremacy and the outward symbols of supremacy in the narrow seas, as well as to a right of seizure of the goods of enemies in neutral ships. War followed (1652) and was prosecuted by the Commonwealth with intrepidity, decision, and

vigour not unworthy of the ancient Senate of Rome at its highest. Cromwell had little share, so far as we are able to discern, in this memorable attempt to found the maritime ascendancy of England: that renown belongs to Vane, the organizer, and to Blake, Deane, and Monk, the sea-generals.

To Cromwell for the time a war between two protestant republics seemed a fratricidal war. It was in conflict with that ideal of religious union and England's place in Europe, which began to ripen in his mind as soon as the stress of war left his imagination free to survey the larger world. Apart from this, he grudged its consumption of treasure, and the vast burden that it laid upon the people. He set the charge at £120,000 a month, or as much as the whole of the taxes came to, and there was besides the injury done by war to trade. The sale of church lands, king's lands, and delinquents' lands did not suffice to fill the gulf. Embarrassed finance as usual deepened popular discontent, heightened the unpopularity of the government, and put off the day of social and political consolidation. Events or visions were by and by to alter Cromwell's mind, not for the better.

In the settlement of the nation no progress was made. Dangerous reefs still showed at every hand on the face of the angry sea. The parliament in 1646 had ordered the establishment of the presbyterian system, but the country was indifferent or hostile. Classes, elderships, synods were in decay, even the standard confession of faith was still in essential articles unconfirmed by law. The fierce struggle over

toleration was still indecisive and unsettled. Ecclesiastical confusion was complete. The Westminster divines, after long buffetings from the Erastian parliament, and the triumphs of the hated independents, had ceased to sit soon after the king's death. Presbyterian had become frankly a name for a party purely political. The state was as little settled as the church. For the formal machinery of government Cromwell cared little. What he sought, what had been deep in his mind amid all the toils of war, was the opening of a new way for righteousness and justice. Parliament, the State, the strength and ordering of a nation, to him were only means for making truth shine in the souls of men, and right and duty prevail in their life and act. 'Disown yourselves,' he exhorted the parliament after the victory at Dunbar, 'but own your authority; and improve it to curb the proud and insolent, such as would disturb the tranquillity of England, though under what specious pretences soever. Relieve the oppressed, hear the groans of poor prisoners in England. Be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions; and if there be any one that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a commonwealth.'

In the course of an interview that Cromwell sought with him, Ludlow hinted pretty plainly the suspicions that influenced the austere party. They had not liked the endeavour to come to terms with the king, and they were shocked by the execution of the mutineer at Ware. Cromwell owned dissatisfaction at the attempted treaty with the king to be reasonable, and excused the execution done upon the soldier as

absolutely necessary to prevent things from falling into confusion. He then said that the Lord was accomplishing what was prophesied in the 110th Psalm, and launched out for at least an hour, says Ludlow with an audible moan, in the exposition of that Psalm. Finally he followed up his declaration of fidelity to a free and equal Commonwealth by describing how the substance of what he sought was a thorough reformation of the clergy and the law. And he travelled so far on the road with the Leveller and the Digger as to declare that 'the law, as it is now constituted, serves only to maintain the lawyer, and to encourage the rich to oppress the poor.' This was in truth the measure of Cromwell's ideals of social reform. Although, however, law-reform and church-reform were the immediate ends of government in his eyes, the questions of parliamentary or other machinery could not be evaded. Was the sitting fragment of a House of Commons fit to execute these reforms, or fit to frame a scheme for a future constitution? Was it to continue in permanence whole or partial? Cromwell's first step on his return was to persuade a majority to fix a date at which the parliament should come to an end, and when that was done we hear little more of him for many months. It was easy to see what would follow. The date fixed for the expiry of the parliament was three years off. The time was too long for effective concentration, and too short for the institution of a great scheme of comprehensive reform. A provisional government working within the limits of a fixed period inevitably works at a heavy disadvantage. Everything

is expected from it, yet its authority is impaired. Anxiety to secure the future blunts attention to the urgencies of the present. Men with a turn for corruption seek to make hay while the sun shines. Parties are shifting and unstable. The host of men who are restless without knowing what it is that they want are never so dangerous. A governing body in such a situation was certain to be unpopular. 'I told them,' said Cromwell afterwards, 'for I knew it better than any one man in the parliament could know it; because of my manner of life which had led me everywhere up and down the nation, thereby giving me to see and know the temper and spirits of all men, and of the best of men—that the Nation loathed their sitting.'

This was probably true enough; unfortunately the systems that were now one after another to take the place of the parliament were loathed just as bitterly. 'It is not the manner of settling these constitutional things,' he said, 'or the manner of one set of men or another doing it; there remains always the grand question after that; the grand question lies in the acceptance of it by those who are concerned to yield obedience to it and accept it.' This essential truth of all sound government he had in the old days proclaimed against the constitution-mongers of the camp, and this was the truth that brought to naught all the constructive schemes of the six years before him. For it became more and more apparent that the bulk of the nation was quite as little disposed to accept the rule of the army as the rule of the mutilated parliament.

In December (1651) Cromwell held one of the conferences, in which he had more faith than the event ever justified, between prominent men in parliament and leading officers in the army. He propounded the two questions, whether a republic or a mixed monarchy would be best; and if a monarchy, then who should be the king. The lawyers, St. John, Lenthall, Whitelocke, were of opinion that the laws of England were interwoven with monarchy. When King Charles bade farewell to his children at St. James's Palace on the eve of his execution, he took the young Duke of Gloucester on his knee, and said to him, 'Mark, child, what I say: they will cut off my head, and perhaps make thee a king; but, mark what I say: You must not be a king, so long as your brothers Charles and James do live.' This very solution was now favoured by the lawyers, and they were for naming a period within which the youthful Duke might come in to the parliament. Cromwell held his hand. Desborough and Whalley could not see why this, as well as other nations, should not be governed in the way of a republic. That was the sentiment of the army. Cromwell thought that it would be difficult, and inclined to the belief that, if it could be done with safety and preservation of rights both as Englishmen and Christians, 'a settlement with somewhat of monarchical power in it would be very effectual.' When the Duke of Gloucester was sent abroad, the only chance of such a settlement went with him.

A little later his reflections brought him to use

words of deeper and more direct import. We need invoke neither craft nor ambition to explain the rise of the thought in Cromwell's mind that he was perhaps himself called to take the place and burden of chief governor. The providences of ten years had seemed to mark him as the instrument chosen by heaven for the doing of a great work. He brooded, as he told men, over the times and opportunities appointed to him by God to serve him in; and he felt that the blessings of God therein bore testimony to him. After Worcester, he hoped that he would be allowed to reap the fruits of his hard labours and hazards, the enjoyment to wit of peace and liberty, and the privileges of a Christian and a man. Slowly he learned, and was earnestly assured by others, that this could not be. The continuing unsettlement was a call to him that, like Joshua of old, he had still a portion of the Lord's work to do and must be foremost in its doing.

Walking one November day (1652) in St. James's Park, he sought a conversation with Whitelocke, who better than any of those about him represented the solid prose of the national mind. Cromwell opened to him the dangers with which their jars and animosities beset the cause. Whitelocke boldly told him that the peril sprang from the imperious temper of the army. Cromwell retorted that on the contrary it sprang rather from the members of parliament, who irritated the army by their self-seeking and greediness, their spirit of faction, their delay in the public business, their design for prolonging their own

power, their meddling in private matters between party and party who ought to have been left to the law-courts. The lives of some of them were scandalous, he said. They were irresponsible and uncontrolled; what was wanted was some authority high enough to check all these exorbitances. Without that, nothing in human reason could prevent the ruin of the Commonwealth. To this invective, not devoid of substance but deeply coloured by the soldier's impatience of a salutary slowness in human affairs, Whitelocke replied by pressing the constitutional difficulty of curbing the parliamentary power from which they themselves derived their own authority. Cromwell broke in upon him with the startling exclamation, 'What if a man should take upon him to be king?' The obstacles in the path were plain enough, and the lawyer set them before Cromwell without flinching. For a short time longer the Lord-General said and did no more, but he and the army watched the parliament with growing suspicion and ill-will. A military revolution became every day more imminent.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BREAKING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

The military revolution of 1653 is the next tall landmark after the execution of the king. It is almost a commonplace, that 'we do not know what party means, if we suppose that its leader is its master'; and the real extent of Cromwell's power over the army is hard to measure. In the spring of 1647, when the first violent breach between army and parliament took place, the extremists swept him off his feet. Then he acquiesced in Pride's Purge, but he did not originate it. In the action that preceded the trial and despatching of the king, it seems to have been Harrison who took the leading part. In 1653, Cromwell said, 'Major-General Harrison is an honest man, and aims at good things; yet from the impatience of his spirit, he will not wait the Lord's leisure, but hurries one into that which he and all honest men will have cause to repent.' If we remember how hard it is to fathom decisive passages in the history of our own time, we see how much of that which we would most gladly know in the distant past must ever remain a surmise. But the best opinion in respect of the revolution of April

1653 seems to be that the royalists were not wrong who wrote that Cromwell's authority in the army depended much on Harrison and Lambert and their fanatical factions; that he was forced to go with them in order to save himself; and that he was the member of the triumvirate who was most anxious to wait the Lord's leisure yet a while longer.

The immediate plea for the act of violence that now followed is as obscure as any other of Cromwell's proceedings. In the closing months of 1652, he once more procured occasions of conference between himself and his officers on the one hand, and members of parliament on the other. He besought the parliament men by their own means to bring forth of their own accord the good things that had been promised and were so long expected,—'so tender were we to preserve them in the reputation of the people.' The list of 'good things' demanded by the army in the autumn of 1652 hardly supports the modern exaltation of the army as the seat of political sagacity. The payment of arrears, the suppression of vagabonds, the provision of work for the poor, were objects easy to ask, but impossible to achieve. The request for a new election was the least sensible of all.

When it was known that the army was again waiting on God and confessing its sinfulness, things were felt to look grave. Seeing the agitation, the parliament applied themselves in earnest to frame a scheme for a new representative body. The army believed that the scheme was a sham, and that the semblance of giving the people a real right of choice

was only to fill up vacant seats by such persons as the House now in possession should approve. This was nothing less than to perpetuate themselves indefinitely. Cromwell and the officers had a scheme of their own: that the parliament should name a certain number of men of the right sort, and these nominees should build a constitution. The parliament in other words was to abdicate after calling a constituent convention. On April 19, a meeting took place in Oliver's apartment at Whitehall with a score of the more important members of parliament. There the plan of the officers and the rival plan of Vane and his friends were brought face to face. What the exact scheme of the parliament was, we cannot accurately tell, and we are never likely to know. Cromwell's own descriptions of it are vague and unintelligible. The bill itself, when the evil day came, he carried away with him under his cloak, and no copy of it survived. It appears, however, that in Vane's belief the best device for a provisional government—and no other than a provisional government was then possible—was that the remnant should continue to sit, the men who fought the deadly battles at Westminster in 1647 and 1648, the men who had founded the Commonwealth in 1649, the men who had carried on its work with extraordinary energy and success for four years and more. These were to continue to sit as a nucleus for a full representation, joining to themselves such new men from the constituencies as they thought not likely to betray the Cause. On the whole we may believe that this was

perhaps the least unpromising way out of difficulties where nothing was very promising. It was to avoid the most fatal of all the errors of the French Constituent, which excluded all its members from office and from seats in the Legislative Assembly to whose inexperienced hands it was entrusting the government of France. To blame its authors for fettering the popular choice was absurd in Cromwell, whose own proposal, instead of a legislature to be partially and periodically renewed (if that was really what Vane meant), was now for a nominated council without any element of popular choice at all. The army, we should not forget, were even less prepared than the parliament for anything like a free and open general election. Both alike intended to reserve parliamentary representation exclusively to such as were godly men and faithful to the interests of the Commonwealth. An open general election would have been as hazardous and probably as disastrous now, as at any moment since the defeat of King Charles in the field; and a real appeal to the country would only have meant ruin to the Good Cause. Neither Cromwell nor Lambert nor Harrison nor any of them dreamed that a parliament to be chosen without restrictions would be a safe experiment. The only questions were what the restrictions were to be; who was to impose them; who was to guard and supervise them. The parliamentary remnant regarded themselves as the fittest custodians, and it is hard to say that they were wrong. In judging these events of 1653, we must look forward to events three years

later. Cromwell had a parliament of his own in 1654; it consisted of 460 members; almost his first step was to prevent more than a hundred of them from taking their seats. He may have been right; but why was the parliament wrong for acting on the same principle? He had another parliament in 1656, and again he began by shutting out nearly a hundred of its elected members. The truth is that when the army cried for a dissolution, they had no ideas as to the parliament that was to follow. At least this much is certain, that whatever failure might have overtaken the plan of Vane and the parliament, it could not have been more complete than the failure that overtook the plan of Cromwell.

Apart from the question of the constitution of parliament, and perhaps regarding that as secondary, Cromwell quarrelled with what rightly or wrongly he describes as the ultimate ideal of Vane and his friends. We should have had fine work, he said four years later—a Council of State and a parliament of four hundred men executing arbitrary government, and continuing the existing usurpation of the duties of the law-courts by legislature and executive. Undoubtedly 'a horrid degree of arbitrariness' was practised by the Rump, but some allowance was to be made for a government in revolution; and if that plea be not good for the parliament, one knows not why it should be good for the no less 'horrid arbitrariness' of the Protector. As for the general character of the constitution here said to be contemplated by the remnant, it has been compared to the French Convention of

1793; but a less invidious and a truer parallel would be with the Swiss Confederacy to-day. However this may be, if dictatorship was indispensable, the dictatorship of an energetic parliamentary oligarchy was at least as hopeful as that of an oligarchy of soldiers. When the soldiers had tried their hands and failed, it was to some such plan as this that after years of turmoil and vicissitude Milton turned. At worst it was no plan that either required or justified violent deposition by a file of troopers.

The conference in Cromwell's apartments at Whitehall on April 19 was instantly followed by one of those violent outrages for which we have to find a name in the dialect of continental revolution. It had been agreed that the discussion should be resumed the next day, and meanwhile that nothing should be done with the bill in parliament. When the next morning came, news was brought to Whitehall that the members had already assembled, were pushing the bill through at full speed, and that it was on the point of becoming law forthwith. At first Cromwell and the officers could not believe that Vane and his friends were capable of such a breach of their word. Soon there came a second messenger and a third, with assurance that the tidings were true, and that not a moment was to be lost if the bill was to be prevented from passing. It is perfectly possible that there was no breach of word at all. The parliamentary probabilities are that the news of the conference excited the jealousy of the private members, as arrangements between front benches are at all times apt to do, that

they took the business into their own hands, and that the leaders were powerless. In astonishment and anger, Cromwell in no more ceremonial apparel than his plain black clothes and grey worsted stockings, hastened to the House of Commons. He ordered a guard of soldiers to go with him. That he rose that morning with the intention of following the counsels that the impatience of the army had long prompted, and finally completing the series of exclusions, mutilations, and purges by breaking up the parliament altogether, there is no reason to believe. Long premeditation was never Cromwell's way. He waited for the indwelling voice, and more than once in the rough tempests of his life, that daimonic voice was a blast of coarse and uncontrolled fury. Hence came one of the most memorable scenes of English history. There is a certain discord as to details among our too scanty authorities—some even describing the fatal transaction as passing with much modesty and as little noise as can be imagined. The description derived by Ludlow who was not present, from Harrison who was, gathers up all that seems material. There appear to have been between fifty and sixty members present.

Cromwell sat down and heard the debate for some time. Then, calling to Major-General Harrison, who was on the other side of the House, to come to him, he told him that he judged the Parliament ripe for a dissolution and this to be the time for doing it. The major-general answered, as he since told me, "Sir, the work is very great and dangerous: therefore I desire you seriously to consider of it before you engage in it." "*You say well,*" replied the general, and thereupon sat still for about a quarter of an hour. Then, the

question for passing the bill being to be put, he said to Major-General Harrison, "*This is the time: I must do it,*" and suddenly standing up, made a speech, wherein he loaded the parliament with the vilest reproaches, charging them not to have a heart to do anything for the public good, to have espoused the corrupt interest of presbytery and the lawyers, who were the supporters of tyranny and oppression—accusing them of an intention to perpetuate themselves in power; *had they not been forced to the passing of this Act, which he affirmed they designed never to observe,* and thereupon told them that the Lord had done with them, and had chosen other instruments for the carrying on his work that were more worthy. This he spoke with so much passion and discomposure of mind as if he had been distracted. Sir Peter Wentworth stood up to answer him, and said that this was the first time that ever he heard such unbecoming language given to the parliament, and that it was the more horrid in that it came from their servant, and their servant whom they had so highly trusted and obliged. But, as he was going on, the general stepped into the midst of the House, where, continuing his distracted language, he said, "*Come, come: I will put an end to your prating.*" Then, walking up and down the House like a madman, and kicking the ground with his feet, he cried out, "*You are no parliament; I say you are no parliament; I will put an end to your sitting; call them in, call them in.*" Whereupon the sergeant attending the parliament opened the doors; and Lieutenant-Colonel Wolseley, with two files of musketeers, entered the House; which Sir Henry Vane observing from his place said aloud, "This is not honest; yea, it is against morality and common honesty." Then Cromwell fell a-railing at *him,* crying out with a loud voice, "*Oh, Sir Henry Vane, Sir Henry Vane, the Lord deliver me from Sir Henry Vane!*" Then, looking to one of the members, he said, "There sits a drunkard" . . . ; and, giving much reviling language to others, he commanded the mace to be taken away, saying, "*What shall we do with this bauble? There, take it away.*" He having

brought all into this disorder, Major-General Harrison went to the Speaker as he sat in the chair, and told him that, seeing things were reduced to this pass, it would not be convenient for him to remain there. The Speaker answered that he would not come down unless he were forced. "Sir," said Harrison, "I will lend you my hand"; and thereupon, putting his hand within his, the Speaker came down. Then Cromwell applied himself to the members of the House . . . and said to them, "*It's you that have forced me to this, for I have sought the Lord night and day that he would rather slay me than put me on the doing of this work!*" [Then] Cromwell . . . ordered the House to be cleared of all the members . . .; after which he went to the clerk, and snatching the Act of Dissolution, which was ready to pass, out of his hand, he put it under his cloak, and, having commanded the doors to be locked up, went away to Whitehall.'

The fierce work was consummated in the afternoon. Cromwell heard that the Council of State, the creation of the destroyed legislature, was sitting as usual. Thither he repaired with Lambert and Harrison by his side. He seems to have recovered composure. 'If you are met here as private persons,' Cromwell said, 'you shall not be disturbed; but if as a Council of State, this is no place for you; and since you cannot but know what was done at the House in the morning, so take notice that the parliament is dissolved.' Bradshaw, who was in the chair, was not cowed. He had not quailed before a more dread scene with Charles four years ago. 'Sir,' he replied, 'we have heard what you did at the House in the morning, and before many hours all England will hear it; but, sir, you are mistaken to think that the parliament is dissolved;

for no power under heaven can dissolve them but themselves; therefore take you notice of that.'

Whatever else is to be said, it is well to remember that to condemn the Rump—a name, by the way, not known until after Cromwell's death—is to go a long way towards condemning the revolution. To justify Cromwell's violence in breaking it up, is to go a long way towards justifying Hyde and even Strafford. If the Commons had really sunk into the condition described by Oliver in his passion, such ignominy showed that the classes represented by it were really incompetent, as men like Strafford had always deliberately believed, to take that supreme share in governing the country for which Pym and his generation of reformers had so manfully contended. For the remnant was the quintessence left after a long series of elaborate distillations. They were not presbyterians, moderates, respectables, bourgeois, pedants, Girondins. They, or the great majority of them, were the men who had resisted a continuance of the negotiations at Newport. They had made themselves accomplices in Pride's Purge. They had ordered the trial of the king. They had set up the Commonwealth without lords or monarch. They were deep in all the proceedings of Cromwellian Thorough. They were the very cream after purification upon purification. If they could not govern, who could?

We have seen the harsh complaints of Cromwell against the parliament in 1652, how selfish its members were, how ready to break into factions, how slow in business, how scandalous the lives of some of

them. Yet this seems little better than the impatient indictment of the soldier, if we remember how only a few months before, the French agent had told Mazarin of the new rulers of the Commonwealth, 'Not only were they powerful by sea and land, but they live without ostentation. . . . They were economical in their private expenses, and prodigal in their devotion to public affairs, for which each one toils as if for his personal interests. They handle large sums of money, which they administer honestly.' We cannot suppose that two years had transformed such men into the guilty objects of Cromwell's censorious attack. Cromwell admitted after he had violently broken them up, that there were persons of honour and integrity among them, who had eminently appeared for God and for the public good both before and throughout the war. It would in truth have been ludicrous to say otherwise of a body that contained patriots so unblemished in fidelity, energy, and capacity as Vane, Scot, Bradshaw, and others. Nor is there any good reason to believe that these men of honour and integrity were a hopeless minority. We need not indeed suppose that the Rump was without time-servers. Perhaps no deliberative assembly in the world ever is without them, for time-serving has its roots in human nature. The question is what proportion the time-servers bore to the whole. There is no sign that it was large. But whether large or small, to deal with time-servers is part, and no inconsiderable part, of the statesman's business, and it is hard to see how with this poor breed Oliver could have dealt worse.

Again, in breaking up the parliament he committed what in modern politics is counted the inexpiable sin of breaking up his party. This was the gravest of all. This was what made the revolution of 1653 a turning-point. The presbyterians hated him as the greatest of independents. He had already set a deep gulf between himself and the royalists of every shade by killing the king. To the enmity of the legitimists of a dynasty, was now added the enmity of the legitimists of parliament. By destroying the parliamentary remnant, he set a new gulf between himself and most of the best men on his own side. Where was the policy? What foundations had he left himself to build upon? What was his calculation, or had he no calculation, of forces, circumstances, individuals, for the step that was to come next? When he stamped in wrath out of the desecrated House, had he ever firmly counted the cost? Or was he in truth as improvident as King Charles had been when he too marched down the same floor eleven years ago? In one sense his own creed erected improvidence into a principle. 'Own your call,' he says to the first of his own parliaments, 'for it is marvellous, and it hath been unprojected. It 's not long since either you or we came to know of it. And indeed this hath been the way God dealt with us all along. To keep things from our own eyes all along, so that we have seen nothing in all his dispensations long beforehand.' And there is the famous saying of his, that 'he goes furthest who knows not where he is going,'—of which Retz said that it showed Cromwell to be a simpleton. We may at least admit the peril of a helmsman who does not forecast his course.

It is true that the situation was a revolutionary one, and the remnant was no more a legal parliament than Cromwell was legal monarch. The constitution had long vanished from the stage. From the day in May, 1641, when the king had assented to the bill making a dissolution depend on the will of parliament, down to the days in March 1649 when the mutilated Commons abolished the House of Lords and the office of a king, story after story of the constitutional fabric had come crashing to the ground. The Rump alone was left to stand for the old tradition of parliament, and it was still clothed, even in the minds of those who were most querulous about its present failure of performance, with a host of venerated associations—the same associations that had lifted up men's hearts all through the fierce tumults of civil war. The rude destruction of the parliament gave men a shock that awakened in some of them angry distrust of Cromwell, in others a broad resentment at the overthrow of the noblest of experiments, and, in the largest class of all, deep misgivings as to the past, silent self-questioning whether the whole movement since 1641 had not been a grave and terrible mistake.

Guizot truly says of Cromwell that he was one of the men who know that even the best course in political action always has its drawbacks, and who accept without flinching the difficulties that may be laid upon them by their own decisions. This time, however, the day was not long in coming when Oliver saw reason to look back with regret upon those whom he now handled with such impetuous severity. When he quarrelled with the first parliament of his Protec-

torate, less than two years hence, he used his old foes, if foes they were, for a topic of reproach against his new ones. 'I will say this on behalf of the Long Parliament, that had such an expedient as this government [the Instrument] been proposed to them; and could they have seen the cause of God provided for; and been by debates enlightened in the grounds of it, whereby the difficulties might have been cleared to them, and the reason of the whole enforced, and the circumstances of time and persons, with the temper and disposition of the people, and affairs both abroad and at home might have been well weighed, I think in my conscience,—well as they were thought to love their seats—they would have proceeded in another manner than you have done.' To cut off in a fit of passion the chance of such a thing was a false step he was never able to retrieve.

CENTRAL

CHAPTER VII.

THE REIGN OF THE SAINTS.

Cromwell was now the one authority left standing. 'By Act of Parliament,' he said, 'I was general of all the forces in the three nations of England, Scotland and Ireland; the authority I had in my hand being so boundless as it was.' This unlimited condition both displeased his judgment and pricked his conscience; he protested that he did not desire to live in it for a single day; and his protest was sincere. Yet in fact few were the days during the five years and a half from the breaking of the parliament to his death, when the green withes of a constitution could bind the arms of this heroic Samson. We have seen how in the distant times when Charles I. was prisoner at Carisbrooke, Cromwell not without a visible qualm had brought to bear upon the scruples of Robert Hammond the doctrine of the People's Safety being the Supreme Law. But *salus populi* is the daily bread of revolutions. It was the foundation, and the only foundation, of the Cromwellian dictatorship in all its changing phases.

After the rude dispersion of the Long Parliament next came the reign of the saints. No experiment

could have worked worse. Here is Cromwell's rueful admission. 'Truly I will now come and tell you a story of my own weakness and folly. And yet it was done in my simplicity, I dare avow it. It was thought then that men of our judgment, who had fought in the wars and were all of a piece upon that account, surely these men will hit it, and these men will do it to the purpose, whatever can be desired. And truly we did think, and I did think so, the more blame to me. And such a company of men were chosen, and did proceed to action. And this was the naked truth, that the issue was not answerable to the simplicity and honesty of the design.' Such was Oliver's own tale related four years afterwards. The discovery that the vast and complex task of human government needs more than spiritual enthusiasm, that to have 'very scriptural notions' is not enough for the reform of stubborn earthly things, marks yet another stage in Cromwell's progress. He was no idealist turned cynic,—that mournful spectacle. He was a warrior called by heaven, as he believed, to save civil order and religious freedom, and it was with this duty heavy on his soul that he watched the working of the scheme that Harrison had vehemently pressed upon him. As Ranke puts it, Cromwell viewed his own ideals not from the point of subjective satisfaction, but of objective necessity; and this is one of the marks of the statesman. Or, if we must use philosophic diction, while the fighting men of a political party may be wrapped up in the absolute, the practical leader is bound fast by the relative.

The company of men so chosen constituted what

stands in history as the Little Parliament, or, parodied from the name of one of its members, Barebones Parliament. They were nominated by Cromwell and his council of officers at their own will and pleasure, helped by the local knowledge of the congregational churches in the country. The writ of summons, reciting how it was necessary to provide for the peace, safety, and good government of the Commonwealth, by committing the trust of such weighty affairs to men with good assurance of love and courage for the interest of God's cause, was issued in the name of Oliver Cromwell, Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief. One hundred and thirty nine of these summonses went out, and presently five other persons were invited by the convention itself to join, including Cromwell, Lambert, and Harrison.

One most remarkable feature was the appearance for the first time of five men to speak for Scotland and six men for Ireland. This was the earliest formal foreshadowing of legislative union. Of the six representatives of Ireland, four were English officers, including Henry Cromwell; and the other two were English by descent. However devoid of any true representative quality in a popular sense, and however transient the plan, yet the presence of delegates sitting in the name of the two outlying kingdoms in an English governing assembly was symbolical of that great consolidating change in the English State which the political instinct of the men of the Commonwealth had demanded, and the sword of Cromwell seemed to have brought within reach. The policy

of incorporation originated in the Long Parliament. With profound wisdom they had based their Scottish schemes upon the emancipation of the common people and small tenants from the oppression of their lords; and Vane, St. John, Lambert, Monk, and others had put the plan into shape. It was the curse of Ireland that no such emancipation was tried there. In Scotland the policy encountered two of the most powerful forces that affect a civilised society, a stubborn sentiment of nationality, and the bitter antagonism of the church. The sword, however, beat down military resistance, and it was left for the Instrument of Government in 1653 to adopt the policy that the Commonwealthsmen had bequeathed to it.

Though so irregular in their source, the nominees of the officers were undoubtedly for the most part men of worth, substance, and standing. Inspired throughout its course by the enthusiastic Harrison, the convention is the high-water mark of the biblical politics of the time, of puritanism applying itself to legislation, political construction, and social regeneration. It hardly deserves to be described as the greatest attempt ever made in history to found a civil society on the literal words of scripture, but it was certainly the greatest failure of such an attempt. To the Council Chamber at Whitehall the chosen notables repaired on the fourth of July (1653), a day destined a century and more later to be the date of higher things in the annals of free government. They seated themselves round the table, and the Lord-General stood by the window near the middle of it.

The room was crowded with officers. Cromwell in his speech made no attempt to hide the military character of the revolution that had brought them together. The indenture, he told them, by which they were constituted the supreme authority, had been drawn up by the advice of the principal officers of the army; it was himself and his fellow officers who had vainly tried to stir up the parliament; he had been their mouthpiece to offer their sense for them; it was the army to whom the people had looked, in their dissatisfaction at the breakdown of parliamentary performance. Yet the very thinking of an act of violence was to them worse, he declared, than any battle that ever they were in, or that could be to the utmost hazard of their lives. They felt how binding it was upon them not to grasp at power for themselves, but to divest the sword of all power in the civil administration. So now God had called this new supreme authority to do his work, which had come to them by wise Providence through weak hands. Such was his opening story. That Cromwell was deeply sincere in this intention of divesting the army of supremacy in civil affairs, and of becoming himself their servant, there are few who doubt. But we only vindicate his sincerity at the cost of his sagacity. The destruction of the old parliament that had at least some spark of legislative authority; the alienation of almost all the staunchest and ablest partisans of the scheme of a commonwealth; the desperate improbability of attracting any large body of members by the rule of the saints, all left the new

order without moral or social foundation, and the power of the sword the only rampart standing.

Meanwhile Oliver freely surrendered himself to the spiritual raptures of the hour. 'I confess I never looked to see such a day as this, when Jesus Christ should be so owned as he is this day in this work. God manifests this to be the day of the Power of Christ, having through so much blood, and so much trial as hath been upon these nations, made this to be one of the great issues thereof; to have his people called to the supreme authority.' Text upon text is quoted in lyric excitement from prophets, psalmists, and apostles, Old Testament dispensation, and New; appeals to the examples of Moses and of Paul, who could wish themselves blotted out of God's book for the sake of the whole people; the verses from James about wisdom from above being pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits; and then at last the sixty-eighth Psalm with its triumphs so exceeding high and great.

So far as the speech can be said to have any single practical note, it is that of Tolerance. 'We should be pitiful . . . that we may have a respect unto all, and be pitiful and tender towards all though of different judgments. Love all, tender all, cherish and countenance all, in all things that are good. And if the poorest Christian, the most mistaken Christian, shall desire to live peaceably and quietly under you —I say, if any shall desire but to lead a life of godliness and honesty, let him be protected.' Toleration was now in Cromwell neither a conclusion drawn

out by logical reason, nor a mere dictate of political expediency. It flowed from a rich fountain in his heart of sympathy with men, of kindness for their sore struggles after saving truth, of compassion for blind stumbles and mistaken paths.

A few weeks began the dissipation of the dream. They were all sincere and zealous, but the most zealous were the worst simpletons. The soldier's jealousy of civil power, of which Cromwell had made himself the instrument on the twentieth of April, was a malady without a cure. The impatience that had grown so bitter against the old parliament soon revived against the new convention. It was the more unreasonable because the convention represented the temper and ideas of the army, such as they were, and the failure of the convention marks the essential sterility of the army viewed as a constructive party. Just as it is the nature of courts of law to amplify the jurisdiction, so it is the well-known nature of every political assembly to extend its powers. The moderate or conservative element seems to have had a small majority in the usual balance of parties, but the forward men made up for inferiority in numbers by warmth and assiduity. The fervour of the forward section in the parliament was stimulated by fanaticism out of doors: by cries that their gold had become dim, the ways of Zion filled with mourning, and a dry wind but neither to fan nor to cleanse upon the land: above all by the assurances of the preachers, that the four monarchies of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, of Alexander and Rome, had each of them passed away, and

that the day had come for the Fifth and final Monarchy, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ upon the earth: and this, no mere reign set up in men's hearts, but a scheme for governing nations and giving laws for settling liberty, property, and the foundations of a commonwealth.

The fidelity of the convention to Cromwell was shown by the unanimous vote that placed him on the Council of State; but the great dictator kept himself in the background, and in good faith hoping against hope he let things take their course. 'I am more troubled now,' said he, 'with the fool than with the knave.' The new men at once and without leave took to themselves the name of parliament. Instead of carrying on their special business of a constituent assembly, they set to work with a will at legislation, and legislation moreover in the high temper of Root-and-Branch, for cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently. A bill was run through all its stages in a single sitting, for the erection of a High Court of Justice in cases where a jury could not be trusted to convict. Ominous language was freely used upon taxation, and it was evident that the sacred obligations of supply and the pay of the soldiers and sailors were in peril. They passed a law requiring that all good marriages must take place before a justice of the peace, after due publication of banns in some open resort sacred or secular. Of the projects of law reform inherited from the Long Parliament they made nonsense. Before they had been a month in session, they passed a resolution that the Court of

Chancery should be wholly taken away and abolished; and after three bills had been brought in and dropped for carrying this resolution into act, they read a second time a fourth bill for summarily deciding cases then pending, and arranging that for the future the ordinary suits in chancery should be promptly despatched at a cost of from twenty to forty shillings. They set a committee, without a lawyer upon it, to work on the reduction of the formless mass of laws, cases, and precedents, to a code that should be of no greater bigness than a pocket-book. The power of patrons to present to livings was taken away. More vital aspects of the church question followed. A committee reported in favour of the appointment of a body of state commissioners with power to eject unfit ministers and fill vacant livings; and, what was a more burning issue, in favour of the maintenance of tithe as of legal obligation. By a majority of two (56 against 54) the House disagreed with the report, and so indicated their intention to abolish tithe and the endowment of ministers of religion by the state. This led to the crisis. The effect of proceedings so singularly ill devised for the settlement of the nation was to irritate and alarm all the nation's most powerful elements. The army, the lawyers, the clergy, the holders of property, all felt themselves attacked; and the Lord-General himself perceived, in his own words afterwards, that the issue of this assembly would have been the subversion of the laws, and of all the liberties of their nation, the destruction of the ministers of the gospel, in short the confusion of all

things; and instead of order, to set up the judicial law of Moses in abrogation of all our administrations. The design that shone so radiantly five months before, had sunk away in clouds and vain chimera. Nor had the reign of chimera even brought popularity. Lilburne, the foe of all government whether it were inspired by folly or by common-sense, appeared once more upon the scene, and he was put upon his trial before a court of law for offences of which he had been pronounced guilty by the Long Parliament. The jury found him innocent of any crime worthy of death, and the verdict was received with shouts of joy by the populace. This was to demonstrate that the government of the saints was at least as odious as the government of the dispossessed Remnant.

The narrow division on the abolition of tithe convinced everybody that the ship was water-logged. Sunday, December 11, was passed in the concoction of devices for bringing the life of the notables to an end. On Monday, the Speaker took the chair at an early hour, and a motion was promptly made that the sitting of the parliament was no longer for the public good, and therefore that they should deliver up to the Lord-General the powers they had received from him. An attempt to debate was made, but as no time was to be lost, in case of members arriving in numbers sufficient to carry a hostile motion, the Speaker rose from his chair, told the sergeant to shoulder the mace, and followed by some forty members who were in the secret set forth in solemn procession to Whitehall. A minority kept their seats, until a couple of colonels

with a file of soldiers came to turn them out. According to a royalist story, one of the colonels asked them what they were doing. 'We are seeking the Lord,' was the answer. 'Then you should go elsewhere,' the colonel replied, 'for to my knowledge the Lord has not been here these twelve years past.' We have Cromwell's words that he knew nothing of this intention to resign. If so, the dismissal of the fragment of the members by a handful of troopers on their own authority is strange, and shows the extraordinary pitch that military manners had reached. Oliver received the Speaker and his retinue with genuine or feigned surprise, but accepted the burden of power that the abdication of the parliament had once more laid upon him.

These proceedings were an open breach with the saints, but as has been justly said (Weingarten), this circumstance involves no more contradiction between the Cromwell of the past and the Protector, than there is contradiction between the Luther who issued in 1520 his flaming manifesto to the Christian nobles of the German nation, and the Luther that two years later confronted the misguided men who supposed themselves to be carrying out doctrines that they had learned from him. Puritanism, like the Reformation generally, was one of those revolts against the leaden yoke of convention, ordinance, institution, in which, whether in individuals or in a tidal mass of men, the human soul soars passionately forth toward new horizons of life and hope. Then the case for convention returns, the need for institutions comes back, the nature of things will not be hurried nor defied. Strong

reaction followed the execution of the king. Painfully Milton now, five years later, bewailed the fact that the people with 'besotted and degenerate baseness of spirit, except some few who yet retain in them the old English fortitude and love of freedom, imbastardised from the ancient nobleness of their ancestors, are ready to fall flat and give adoration to the image and memory of this man.' These were the two strong floods between which, in their ebb and flow, Cromwell found himself caught. His practical eye discerned it all, and what had happened. Yet this was perhaps the moment when Cromwell first felt those misgivings of a devout conscience that inspired the question put by him on his deathbed, whether it was certain that a man once in grace must be always in grace.

BOOK V.

(1653-58)

CHAPTER I.

FIRST STAGE OF THE PROTECTORATE.

I.

WHAT are all our histories, cried Cromwell in 1655, what are all our traditions of Actions in former times, but God manifesting himself, that hath shaken and tumbled down and trampled upon everything that he had not planted? It was not long after, that Bossuet began to work out the same conception in the glowing literary form of the discourse on universal history. What was in Bossuet the theme of a divine, was in Cromwell the life-breath of act, toil, hope, submission. For him, the drama of time is no stage-play, but an inspired and foreordained dispensation ever unfolding itself 'under a waking and all-searching Eye,' and in this high epic England had the hero's part. 'I look at the people of these nations as the blessing of the Lord,' he said, 'and they are a people blessed by God. . . . If I had not had a hope fixed in me that this cause and this business was of God, I would many

years ago have run from it. . . . But if the Lord take pleasure in England, and if he will do us good, he is very able to bear us up. . . .' As England was the home of the Chosen People, so also he read in all the providences of battlefields from Winceby to Worcester, that he was called to be the Moses or the Joshua of the new deliverance.

Milton's fervid Latin appeal of this date did but roll forth in language of his own incomparable splendour, though in phrases savouring more of Pericles or Roman stoic than of the Hebrew sacred books, the thoughts that lived in Cromwell. Milton had been made Secretary of the first Council of State almost immediately after the execution of the king in 1649, and he was employed in the same or similar duties until the end of Cromwell and after. Historic imagination seeks to picture the personal relations between these two master-spirits, but no trace remains. They must sometimes have been in the council chamber together; but whether they ever interchanged a word we do not know. When asked for a letter of introduction for a friend to the English ambassador in Holland (1657), Milton excused himself, saying, 'I have very little acquaintance with those in power, inasmuch as I keep very much to my own house, and prefer to do so.' A painter's fancy has depicted Oliver dictating to the Latin secretary the famous despatches on the slaughtered saints whose bones lay scattered on the Alpine mountains cold; but by then the poet had lost his sight, and himself probably dictated the English drafts from Thurloe's instructions, and then turned

them into his own sonorous Latin. He evidently approved the supersession of the parliament, though we should remember that he includes in all the breadth of his panegyric both Bradshaw and Overton, who as strongly disapproved. He bids the new Protector to recall the aspect and the wounds of that host of valorous men who with him for leader had fought so strenuous a fight for freedom, and to revere their shades. Further he adjures him to revere himself, that thus the freedom for which he had faced countless perils and borne such heavy cares, he would never suffer to be either violated by hand of his, or impaired by any other. 'Thou canst not be free if we are not; for it is the law of nature that he who takes away the liberty of others is by that act the first himself to lose his own. A mighty task hast thou undertaken; it will probe thee to the core, it will show thee as thou art, thy carriage, thy force, thy weight; whether there be truly alive in thee that piety, fidelity, justice, and moderation of spirit, for which we believe that God hath exalted thee above thy fellows. To guide three mighty states by counsel, to conduct them from institutions of error to a worthier discipline, to extend a provident care to furthest shores, to watch, to foresee, to shrink from no toil, to flee all the empty shows of opulence and power, —these indeed are things so arduous that, compared with them, war is but as the play of children.'

Such is the heroic strain in which the man of high aerial visions hailed the man with strength of heart and arm and power of station. This Miltonian glory of words marks the high tide of the advance from the

homely sages of 1640, to the grand though transient recasting of the fundamental conceptions of national consciousness and life. The apostle and the soldier were indeed two men of different type, and drew their inspiration from very different fountains; but we may well believe Aubrey when he says that there were those who came over to England only to see Oliver Protector and John Milton.

II.

Four days sufficed to erect a new government. The scheme was prepared by the officers, with Lambert at their head. Cromwell fell in with it, caring little about formal constitutions either way. On the afternoon of December 16, 1653, a procession set out from Whitehall for Westminster Hall. The judges in their robes, the high officers of government, the Lord Mayor and the magnates of the city, made their way amid two lines of soldiers to the Chancery Court where a chair of state had been placed upon a rich carpet. Oliver, clad in a suit and cloak of black velvet, and with a gold band upon his hat, was invited by Lambert to take upon himself the office of Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, conformably to the terms of an Instrument of Government which was then read. The Lord-General assented, and forthwith took and subscribed the solemn oath of fidelity to the matters and things set out in the Instrument. Then, covered, he sat down in the chair of state while those in attendance stood bare-

headed about him. The commissioners ceremoniously handed to him the great seal, and the Lord Mayor proffered him his sword of office. The Protector returned the seal and sword, and after he had received the grave obeisance of the dignitaries around him, the act of state ended and he returned to the palace of Whitehall, amid the acclamations of the soldiery and the half-ironic curiosity of the crowd. He was proclaimed by sound of trumpet in Palace Yard, at the Old Exchange, and in other places in London, the Lord Mayor attending in his robes, the sergeants with their maces, and the heralds in their gold coats. Henceforth the Lord Protector 'observed new and great state, and all ceremonies and respects were paid to him by all sorts of men as to their prince.' The new constitution thus founding, though it did not long uphold, the Protectorate, was the most serious of the expedients of that distracted time.

The first stage of the Protectorate was in fact a near approach to a monarchical system very like that which Strafford would have set up for Charles, or which Bismarck two hundred years later set up for the King of Prussia. One difference is that Cromwell honestly strove to conceal from himself as from the world the purely military foundations of his power. His social ideal was wide as the poles from Strafford's, but events forced him round to the same political ideal. A more material difference is that the Protector had a powerful and victorious army behind him, and Strafford and his master had none.

On the breakdown of the Barebones parliament, the

sphinx once more propounded her riddle. How to reconcile executive power with popular supremacy, what should be the relations between executive and legislature, what the relations between the church and the magistrate,—these were the problems that divided the dead king and the dead parliament, that had baffled Pym and Hyde, that had perplexed Ireton and the officers, and now confronted Oliver. It was easy to affirm the sovereignty of the people as an abstract truth. But the machinery? We must count one of the curiosities of history the scene of this little group of soldiers sitting down to settle in a few hours the questions that to this day, after ages of constitution-mongering and infinitely diversified practice and experiment all over the civilised world, beset the path of self-governing peoples. No doubt they had material only too abundant. Scheme after scheme had been propounded at Oxford, at Uxbridge, at Newcastle, at Newport. The army had drawn up its Heads of Proposals, and these were followed, a few days before the king was brought to the scaffold, by the written constitution known as the Agreement of the People. The officers had well-trodden ground to go upon, and yet the journey was nearly as obscure as it had ever been.

In face of the Lord-General, as in face of the Lord's Anointed, the difficulty was the same, how to limit the power of the executive over taxation and an army, without removing all limits on the power of the representative legislature. Cromwell, undoubtedly in earnest as he was in desiring to restore parliamentary

government, and to set effective checks on the Single Person, nevertheless by temperament, by habit of mind engendered of twelve years of military command, and by his view of the requirements of the crisis, was the last man to work a parliamentary constitution. A limited dictator is an impossibility, and he might have known it, as Napoleon knew it. If Cromwell and his men could not work with the Rump, if they could not work with the saints, the officers as they rapidly hammered together the Instrument of Government might have known that no ingenuity would make their brand-new carpentering water-tight.

The Magna Charta that now installed Oliver as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, and survived for over three years, though loose enough in more than one essential particular, was compact. The government was to be in a single person and a parliament, but to these two organs of rule was added a Council of State. This was a very imperfect analogue of the old Privy Council or of the modern cabinet. Its members were named in the Act and sat for life. The Council had a voice, subject to confirmation by parliament, in appointments to certain of the high offices. Each of the three powers was a check upon the other two. Then came the clauses of a reform bill, and Cromwell has been praised for anticipating Pitt's proposals for demolishing rotten boroughs, in fact, the reform bill was adopted bodily from the labours of Ireton, Vane, and the discarded parliament. The county franchise was restricted to possessors of property of two hundred pounds.

The parliament, a single House, was to sit for at least five months in every three years. This got rid of Cromwell's bugbear of perpetuity. The Protector if supported by a majority of his Council could summon a parliament in an emergency, and in case of a future war with a foreign state he had no option. Scotland and Ireland were each to send thirty members. One sub-clause of most equivocal omen made a majority of the Council into judges of the qualifications and disqualifications of the members returned; and as we shall see, this legalisation of future mutilations of the legislature by the executive did not long remain a dead letter. Every bill passed by parliament was to be presented to the Protector for his consent, and if he did not within twenty days give his consent, then the bill became law without it, unless he could persuade them to let it drop. The normal size of the army and navy was fixed, and a fixed sum was set down for civil charges. The Protector and Council were to decide on ways and means of raising the revenue required, and parliament could neither lower the charges nor alter ways and means without the Protector's consent. In case of extraordinary charge, as by reason of war, the consent of parliament was needed; but if parliament were not sitting, then the Protector with the majority of his Council had power both to raise money and to make ordinances, until parliament should take order concerning them. This power of making provisional laws was not exercised after the assembling of the first parliament.

The two cardinal questions of control of the army and the settlement of religion were decided in a way little dreamed of by Eliot or Coke, by Pym or Hampden. While parliament was sitting, that is for five months out of three years, its approval was required for the disposal of forces by land and sea; when parliament was not sitting, the Protector with the assent of a majority of the Council could do as he pleased. The religious clauses are vague, but they are remarkable as laying down for the first time with authority a principle of toleration. A public profession of the Christian religion as contained in the scriptures was to be recommended as the faith of these nations, and the teachers of it were to be confirmed in their subsistence. This embodies, as the Agreement of the People had done before, the principles of establishment and endowment of some form of national church. But adherence was not to be compulsory, and all Christians outside the national communion, save papists, prelatists, and such as under the profession of Christ hold forth licentiousness, were to be protected in the exercise of their own creed. So far had reformers travelled from the famous section of the Grand Remonstrance twelve years before, where the first stout forefathers of the Commonwealth had explicitly disavowed all purpose of letting loose the golden reins of discipline in church government, or leaving private persons to believe and worship as they pleased. The result reduced this declaration to little more than the plausible record of a pious opinion. The independents when they found a chance were to

show themselves as rigorous if not quite as narrow as other people. Meanwhile, in excluding the prelatists, time was to show that they excluded the majority.

The Instrument of Government had a short life, and not an important one. It has a certain surviving interest, unlike the French constitutions of the Year III., the Year VIII., and other ephemera of the same species, because, along with its sequel of the Humble Petition and Advice (1657), it is the only attempt in English history to work in this island a wholly written system, and because it has sometimes been taken to foreshadow the constitution of the United States. The American analogy does not hold. The Cromwellian separation of executive from legislative power was but a fitful and confused attempt. Historically, there are no indications that the framers of the American constitution had the Instrument in their minds, and there are, I believe, no references to it either in the pages of the *Federalist*, or in the recorded constitutional debates of the several States. Nor was it necessary for the American draftsmen to go back to the Commonwealth, for their scheme was based upon state constitutions already subsisting, and it was in them that they found the principle of fundamentals and constitutional guarantees not alterable like ordinary laws. Apart from historical connection the coincidences between the Instrument and the American constitution are very slight, while the differences are marked. The Protector is to be chosen by the Council, not by the people. He has no veto on legislation. His tenure is for life: so is the tenure

of the Council. There is no direct appeal to the electorate as to any executive office. Parliament, unlike Congress, is to consist of one House. The two schemes agree in embodying the principle of a rigid constitution, but in the Instrument there are according to Oliver himself only four fundamentals, and all the rest is as liable to amendment or repeal, and in the same way, as any other statute. This is essentially different from the American system alike in detail and in principle. Make by Act an American president master for life, with the assent of a small council of persons nominated for life, of the power of the sword, of the normal power of the purse, of the power of religious establishment, for thirty-one months out of thirty-six, and then you might have something like the Instrument of Government. The fatal passion for parallels has led to a much more singular comparison. Within the compass of a couple of pages Mommsen likens the cynical and blood-thirsty Sulla to Don Juan because he was frivolous, to George Washington because he was unselfish, and to Oliver Cromwell because they both set up or restored order and a constitution.

III.

In virtue of their legislative capacity Cromwell and his council passed more than eighty ordinances in the eight months between the establishment of the Protectorate and the meeting of the parliament. This is commonly called Cromwell's great creative period, yet

in truth the list is but a meagre show of legislative fertility. Many of them were no more than directions for administration. Some were regulations of public police. One of them limited the number of hackney coaches in London to two hundred. Duels and challenges were prohibited, and to kill an adversary in a duel was made a capital offence. Drunkenness and swearing were punished. Cock-fighting was suppressed, and so for a period was horse-racing. There were laws for raising money upon the church lands, and laws for fixing excise. Among the earliest and most significant was the repeal of the memorable enactment of the first days of the republic, that required an engagement of allegiance to the Commonwealth. This relaxation of the republican test was taken by the more ardent spirits as stamping the final overthrow of the system consecrated to freedom, and it still further embittered the enmity of those who through so many vicissitudes had in more hopeful days been Cromwell's closest allies. More far-reaching and fundamental were the edicts incorporating Scotland and Ireland in one Commonwealth with England, but these were in conformity with the bill of the Long Parliament in 1652. From the Long Parliament also descended the policy of the edict for the settlement of lands in Ireland. One of the cardinal subjects of the ordinances in this short period of reforming and organizing activity was the Court of Chancery. The sixty-seven clauses reforming chancery are elaborate, but they show no presiding mind. Imperious provisions, that every cause must be de-

termined on the day on which it is set down for hearing, savour more of the sergeant and his guard-room than of a law court threading its way through mazes of disputed fact, conflicting testimony, old precedents, new circumstances, elastic principles and ambiguous application. Lenthall, now Master of the Rolls, vowed that he would be hanged up at the gate of his own court rather than administer the ordinance. In revolutionary times men are apt to change their minds, and he thought better of it. Others were more constant. It is impossible to read Whitelocke's criticisms without perceiving that he and his brother commissioner of the great seal had good grounds for their refusal to execute the ordinance. The judgment of modern legal critics not unfriendly to Oliver, is that his attempt at chancery reform shows more zeal than discretion; that it substituted hard-and-fast rules for the flexible system that was indispensable in equity; that it was spoiled by lack of moderation. To his honour, he abhorred the harshness of the criminal law, and would fain have mitigated it, but his efforts came to nothing. Equally ineffectual were his aspirations to reform morals and manners by law. The old Adam in Englishmen was too much for him, and he might have remembered here especially his own maxim that all depends on acceptance by the people.

Cromwell possessed far too much of that instinct for order and government, which is very narrowly described when it is called conservative, not to do his best to secure just administration of the law.

Some of the most capable lawyers of the age were persuaded to serve in the office of judge, and there is no doubt that they discharged with uprightness, good sense, and efficiency both their strictly judicial duties and the important functions in respect of general county business which in those days fell upon the judges of assize. Slackness in this vital department would speedily have dissolved social order in a far deeper sense than any political step, even the execution of a king or the breaking of a parliament. But whenever what he chose to regard as reason of state affected him, Cromwell was just as ready to interfere with established tribunals and to set up tribunals specially to his purpose, as if he had been a Stuart or a Bourbon.

One of the strong impulses of the age was educational. Cromwell was keenly alive to it, and both in the universities and elsewhere he strove to further it. Nothing survived the Restoration. Most important of all Cromwell's attempts at construction was the scheme for the propagation of religion, and it deserves attention. The dire controversy that split up the patriot party in the first years of the Long Parliament, that wrecked the throne, that was at the bottom of the quarrels with the Scots, that inspired the fatal feud between presbyterian and independent, that occupied the last days of the Rump, and brought to naught the reign of the saints, was still the question that went deepest in social life. The forefathers of the Commonwealth had sought a state church with compulsory uniformity. The fervid soul of Milton,

on the contrary, was eager for complete dissociation of church from state, eager 'to save free conscience from the paw Of hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw.' So were the most advanced men in the parliament of Barebones. But voluntaryism and toleration in this uncompromising temper was assuredly not universal even among independents. Cromwell had never committed himself to it. In adhesion to the general doctrine of liberty of conscience, he had never wavered. Perhaps it was the noblest element in his whole mental equipment. He valued dogmatic nicety as little in religion as he valued constitutional precision in politics. His was the cast of mind to which the spirit of system is in every aspect wholly alien. The presence of God in the hearts of men; the growth of the perfect man within us; the inward transformation not by literal or speculative knowledge, but by participation in the divine, in things of the mind; no compulsion but that of light and reason, —such was ever his faith. I am not a man, he said, scrupulous about words or names or such things.

This was the very temper for a comprehensive settlement, if only the nation had been ripe for comprehension. Cromwell had served on two important parliamentary committees on propagation of the gospel after his return from Worcester. There on one occasion it pleased somebody on the committee zealously to argue against a Laodicean indifferency, professing that he would rather be a Saul than a Gallio. Then Cromwell made the vehement declaration that he would rather have Mahometanism per-

mitted, than that one of God's children should be persecuted. But the question of Toleration was one, and that of a state-paid ministry was another. Toleration with the two stereotyped exclusions of popery and prelacy, as we have seen, was definitely adopted, so far as words went, in two sections of the Instrument of Government, and so too was the principle of a public profession of religion to be maintained from public funds. An episcopal critic was angry at the amazing fact that in the Magna Charta of the new constitution there was not a word of churches or ministers, nor anything else but the Christian religion in general—as if the Christian religion in general were but something meagre and diminutive. The usual and inevitable controversy soon sprang into bitter life, as to what were the fundamentals covered by this bland and benignant phrase, and the divines had not effectually settled their controversy when they were overtaken by the Restoration. What Cromwell's ordinance of 1654 did was, upon the principle of the Instrument, to frame a working system. In substance he adopted the scheme that Dr. John Owen, now Dean of Christ Church, had submitted to the parliament in 1652, and that was in principle accepted by the Rump in its closing days. A story is told by Bishop Wilkins, who was the husband of Cromwell's youngest sister Robina, that the Protector often said to him that no temporal government could have a sure support without a national church that adhered to it, and that he thought England was capable of no constitution but

episcopacy. The second imputation must be apocryphal, but Cromwell had undoubtedly by this time firmly embraced the maxim alike of King Charles and of the Long Parliament, that the care of religion is the business of the state. His ordinances institute a double scheme for expelling bad ministers, and testing the admission of better. No man was henceforth to be capable of receiving a stipend who failed to satisfy of his character, conversation, and general fitness a commission of divines and laymen, some forty in number, divines being to laymen as three to one. By the side of this commission of Triers was a smaller commission of Ejectors, for the converse task of removing ignorant, negligent, or scandalous persons. The tithe was maintained and patronage was maintained, only security was taken for the fitness of the presentee. No theological tests were prescribed. No particular church organization was imposed, though episcopacy, like the Prayer Book, was forbidden. Of the three sorts of godly men, said Oliver, presbyterians, baptists, and independents, so long as a man had the root of the matter in him, it does not concern his admission to a living, to whatever of the three judgments he may belong. The parishes were to adopt the presbyterian or the congregational form as they liked best. In practice, outside of London and Lancashire, where the presbyterianism established by the parliament in 1647 had taken root, the established church during the Protectorate was on the congregational model, with so much of presbyterianism about it as came from free association for discipline and

other purposes. The important feature in Oliver's establishment was that a man who did not relish the service or the doctrine or the parson provided for him by public authority at his parish church, was free to seek truth and edification after his own fashion elsewhere. This wise liberality, which wins Oliver so many friends to-day, in those times bitterly offended by establishment the host of settled voluntaries, and offended the greater host of rigorous presbyterians by toleration. It may well have been that he determined to set up his system of church government by the summary way of ordinance before parliament met, because he knew that no parliament even partially representative would pass it.

We owe the best picture of the various moods of the pulpit men at this interesting moment to the profoundest theologian of them all. Baxter recognised, like other people, that the victorious revolutionary soldier was now endeavouring to dam within safe banks the torrent that the revolution had set running. Now, he says, Cromwell exclaims against the giddiness of the unruly extremists; and earnestly pleads for order and government. This putting about of the ship's helm affected men's minds in different ways. Some declared that they would rather see both tithes and universities thrown overboard than submit to a treacherous usurpation. Others said that it was Providence that had brought the odious necessity about, whoever might be its instrument; and necessity required them to accept the rule of any one who could deliver them from anarchy. Most ministers took a middle way, and it

was Baxter's own way:—'I did in open conference declare Cromwell and his adherents to be guilty of treason and rebellion, aggravated by perfidiousness and hypocrisy, but yet I did not think it my duty to rave against him in the pulpit; and the rather because, as he kept up his approbation of a godly life in the general, and of all that was good except that which the interest of his sinful cause engaged him to be against; so I perceived that it was his design to do good in the main . . . more than any had done before him.' Even against his will Baxter admits that the scheme worked reasonably well. Some rigid independents, he says, were too hard upon Arminians. They were too long in seeking evidence of sanctification in the candidate, and not busy enough in scenting out his Antinomianism or his Anabaptism. Still they kept the churches free of the heedless pastor whose notion of a sermon was only a few good words patched together to talk the people asleep on Sunday, while all the other days of the week he would go with them to the alehouse and harden them in sin. Cromwell himself was an exemplary patron. 'Having near one half of the livings in England in his own immediate disposal, he seldom bestoweth one of them upon any man whom himself doth not first examine and make trial of in person, save only that at such times as his great affairs happen to be more urgent than ordinary, he useth to appoint some other to do it in his behalf; which is so rare an example of piety that the like is not to be found in the stories of princes.'

His ideal was a state church, based upon a com-

prehension from which episcopalians were to be shut out. The exclusion was fatal to it as a final settlement. The rebellion itself, by arresting and diverting the liberal movement in progress within the church when the political outbreak first began, had for ever made a real comprehension impossible. This is perhaps the heaviest charge against it, and the gravest set-off against its indubitable gains.

The mischief had been done in the years, roughly speaking, from 1643 to 1647, when some two thousand of the episcopal clergy were turned out of their churches and homes with many circumstances of suffering and hardship. The authors of these hard proceedings did not foresee the distant issue, which made so deep and dubious a mark upon the social life of England for centuries to come. As soon as the day of reaction arrived, less than twenty years later, it brought cruel reprisals. In 1662 the episcopalians, when the wheel brought them uppermost, ejected two thousand non-conformists on the famous day of Saint Bartholomew, who might seem to be the patron saint of Christian enormities. The nation fell asunder into the two standing camps of churchman and dissenter, which in their protracted strife for superiority on the one hand and equality on the other, did so much to narrow public spirit and pervert the noble ideal of national citizenship. That disastrous direction was first imparted to church polity by the presbyterians; but independents, when in their turn of faction they grasped power, did nothing to redress the wrong committed by their rivals.

CHAPTER II.

QUARREL WITH THE FIRST PARLIAMENT.

WHITELOCKE in his mission to Sweden (1653-4) saw Oxenstiern, the renowned minister who had played so great a part in the history of Gustavus Adolphus and of the protestant world—one of the sages, not too many of them on his own showing, who have tried their hand at the government of men. The Chancellor inquired about Cromwell's age, health, children, family, and temper, and said that the things that he had done argued as much courage and wisdom as any actions that had been seen for many years. Still the veteran was not dazzled. He told Whitelocke that the new Protector's strength would depend upon the confirmation of his office by parliament. As it was, it looked to him like an election by the sword, and the precedents of such elections had always proved dangerous and not peaceable, ever since the choice of Roman emperors by the legions. Christina, the queen, went deeper, and hit on a parallel more to the point. Your General, she said, 'hath done the greatest things of any man in the world; the Prince of Condé is next to him, but short of him.' Much of his story, she proceeded, 'hath some parallel with that of my ancestor Gustavus the First, who from a private gentleman of a

noble family, was advanced to the title of Marshal of Sweden, because he had risen up and rescued his country from the bondage and oppression which the King of Denmark had put upon them, and expelled that king; and for his reward he was at last elected King of Sweden, and I believe that your General will be King of England in conclusion.' 'Pardon me, Madam,' replied the sedate Whitelocke, 'that cannot be, because England is resolved into a commonwealth; and my General hath already sufficient power and greatness, as general of all their forces both by sea and land, which may content him.' 'Resolve what you will,' the queen insisted, 'I believe he resolves to be king; and hardly can any power or greatness be called sufficient, when the nature of man is so prone as in these days to all ambition.' Whitelocke could only say that he found no such nature in his General. Yet it needed no ambition, but only inevitable memory of near events, to recall to Cromwell the career of Gustavus Vasa, and we may be sure the case often flitted through his mind.

Two parliaments were held during the Protectorate, the first of them assembling in 1654 on the third of September, the famous anniversary day of the Cromwellian calendar. It lasted barely five months. A glance at the composition of it was enough to disclose the elements of a redoubtable opposition. The ghost of the Long Parliament was there in the persons of Bradshaw, Scot, Haselrig, and others; and although Vane was absent, the spirit of irreconcilable alienation from a personal government resting on the drawn

sword was both present and active. No royalist was eligible, but the presbyterians of what would now be called the extreme right were not far from royalists, and even the presbyterians of the centre could have little ardour for a man and a system that marked the triumph of the hated independents. The material for combinations unfriendly to the government was only too evident.

They all heard a sermon in Westminster Abbey, where the Protector had gone in his coach with pages, lackeys, lifeguards, in full state. Henry Cromwell and Lambert sat with him bare-headed in the coach, perhaps in their different ways the two most capable of all the men about him. After the sermon they crossed over from the Abbey to the Painted Chamber, and there Oliver addressed them in one of his strange speeches,—not coherent, not smooth, not always even intelligible, but with a strain of high-hearted fervour in them that pierces through rugged and uncouth forms; with the note of a strong man having great things to say, and wrestling with their very greatness in saying them; often rambling, discursive, and overloaded; sometimes little better than rigmarole, even though the rigmarole be lighted now and again with the flash of a noble thought or penetrating phrase; marked by curious admixture of the tone of the statesman's council-chamber with the tone of the ranter's chapel; still impressive by their labouring sincerity, by the weight of their topics, and by that which is the true force of all oratory worth talking about, the momentum of the speaker's history, personality, and purpose.

The Protector opened on a high and characteristic note, by declaring his belief that they represented not only the interests of three great nations, but the interest of all the Christian world. This was no rhetorician's phrase, but a vivid and unchanging ideal in his mind after he had gained a position lofty enough to open to his gaze the prospect beyond the English shores. Here hyperbole ended, and the speech became a protest against the levelling delusions of the saints and the extremists; a vindication of the policy of the government in making peace abroad, and saving treasure and settling religion at home; and an exhortation to a holy and gracious understanding of one another and of their business. The deeply marked difference in tone from the language in which he had opened the Little Parliament indicates the growing reaction in the Protector's own mind, and the rapidity with which he was realising the loud call for conservative and governing quality in face of the revolutionary wreckage.

The spectres of old dispute at once rose up. Those who could recall the quarrel between king and parliament found that after all nothing was settled, hardly even so much as that the government of the three kingdoms should be a parliamentary government. The mutual suspicions of parliament and army were as much alive as ever. The members no sooner returned to their own chamber, than they began instantly to consider the constitution under which they existed. In other words, they took themselves seriously. No parliament supposing itself clothed with popular authority could have been expected to

accept without criticism a ready-made scheme of government fastened on it by a military junto. If the scheme was to be parliamentary, nothing could be more certain than that parliament itself must make it so. A protector by right of the army was as little tolerable to the new parliament, as a king by divine right had been to the old. They sat there by the authority of the good people of England, and how could it be contended that this authority did not include the right of judging the system on which the good people of England were henceforth to be governed?

That was the very ground on which Oliver had quarrelled with the Rump. He now dealt with the first parliament of the Protectorate as decisively, if not quite so passionately, as with the parliament of the Commonwealth. After constitutional discussion had gone on for less than a fortnight, members one morning found Westminster Hall and its approaches full of soldiers, the door of the House locked in their faces, and only the gruff explanation that the Protector desired them to meet him in the Painted Chamber. Here Oliver addressed them in language of striking force, winding up with an act of power after the model of Pride's Purge and all the other arbitrary exclusions. His key-note was patient and argumentative remonstrance, but he did not mince his meaning and he took high ground. He reminded them that it was he who by the Instrument was laying down power, not assuming it. The authority he had in his hand, he told them, was boundless. It was only of

his own will that on this arbitrary power he accepted limits. His acceptance was approved by a vast body of public opinion: first by the soldiers, who were a very considerable part of these nations, when there was nothing to keep things in order but the sword; second by the capital city of London, and by Yorkshire, the greatest county in England; third by the judges of the land; and last of all by the parliament itself. For had not the members been chosen on a written indenture, with the proviso that they should not have power to alter the government by a single person and a parliament? Some things in the Instrument, he said, were fundamental, others were only circumstantial. The circumstantials they might try to amend as they might think best. But the four fundamentals—government by a single person and a parliament, liberty of conscience as a natural right, the non-perpetuation of parliament, the divided or balanced control of the military forces—these were things not to be parted with and not to be touched. 'The wilful throwing away of this government, such as it is, so owned by God, so approved by men, were a thing which, and in reference not to my good, but to the good of these nations and of posterity, I can sooner be willing to be rolled into my grave and buried with infamy, than I can give my consent unto.'

Then the stroke fell. As they had slighted the authority that called them, he told them that he had caused a stop to be put to their entrance into the parliament House, until they had signed a promise to be true and faithful to the Lord Protector and the

Commonwealth, and not to alter the government as settled in a single person and a parliament. The test was certainly not a narrow nor a rigid one, and within a few days some 300 out of the 460 subscribed. The rest, including Bradshaw, Haselrig, and others of that stalwart group, refused to sign, and went home. Such was the Protector's short way with a parliamentary opposition.

The purge was drastic, but it availed little. By the very law of its being the parliament went on with the interrupted debate. Ample experience has taught us since those days that there is no such favourite battle-ground for party conflict as revision of a constitution. They now passed a resolution making believe that Oliver's test was their own. They affirmed the fundamentals about the double seat of authority, about Oliver's protectorate for life, about a parliament every three years, as gravely as if members had not just signed a solemn promise not to reject them. Then they made their way through the rest of the two-and-forty articles of the Instrument, expanding them into sixty. They fought the question whether the protectorate should be hereditary, and by a large majority decided that it should not. The province of the Council was narrowed. Protector and parliament were to determine in conjunction what composed the doctrines within the public profession of religion, and what on the other hand were damnable heresies; but, these two things defined, then parliament could pass bills dealing with heresies, or with the teaching and discipline of established ministers, over the head of

the Protector. On the all-important chapter of the military forces, the parliament was as much bent upon extending its association in authority with the Protector, as the Protector had in old days been bent upon the same thing in respect of King Charles. The Instrument set the army at thirty thousand, but it was now nearly twice as many. Parliament here called for a reduction to the legal figure, and laid down general principles for the future. During his life parliament was to have a voice in fixing the numbers of the armed force; after his death, it was to decide the disposal of it; and the sum fixed for it was to be reconsidered by parliament five years later. In all this there was nothing unreasonable, if parliament was in reality to be a living organ. Such was the work of revision.

It was now that Oliver realised that perhaps he might as well have tried to live with the Rump. We have already seen the words in which he almost said as much. The strange irony of events had brought him within sight of the doctrines of Strafford and of Charles, and showed him to have as little grasp of parliamentary rule and as little love of it as either of them. He was determined not to accept the revised constitution. 'Though some may think that it is an hard thing,' he said, 'to raise money without parliamentary authority upon this nation, yet I have another argument to the good people of this nation, whether they prefer having their will, though it be their destruction, rather than comply with things of Necessity.' Then, as to the armed forces, though

for the present that the Protector should have in his power the militia seems the hardest thing, 'yet, if the power of the militia should be yielded up at such a time as this, when there is as much need of it to keep this cause, as there was to get it for the sake of this cause, what would become of us all?' If he were to yield up at any time the power of the militia, how could he do the good he ought, or hinder parliament from making themselves perpetual, or imposing what religion they pleased upon men's conscience? But all this is the principle of pure absolutism.

In other words, Cromwell did not in his heart believe that any parliament was to be trusted. He may have been right, but then this meant a deadlock, and what way could be devised out of it? The representatives were assuredly not to blame for doing their best to convert government by the sword into that parliamentary government which was the very object of the civil war, and which was still both the professed and the real object of Cromwell himself. What he did was to dissolve them at the first hour at which the Instrument gave him the right (January 1655).

A remarkable passage occurs in one of the letters of Henry Cromwell to Thurloe two years later (March 4, 1657), which sheds a flood of light on this side of the Protectorate from its beginning to the end. The case could not be more wisely propounded. 'I wish his highness would consider how casual [incalculable] the motions of a parliament are, and how many of them are called before one be found to answer the

ends thereof; and that it is the natural genius of such great assemblies to be various, inconsistent, and for the most part froward with their superiors; and therefore that he would not wholly reject so much of what they offer as is necessary to the public welfare. And the Lord give him to see how much safer it is to rely upon persons of estate, interest, integrity, and wisdom, than upon such as have so amply discovered their envy and ambition, and whose faculty it is by continuing of confusion to support themselves.' How much safer, that is to say, to rely upon a parliament with all its slovenly, slow, and froward ways, than upon a close junto of military grandees with a standing army at their back. This is what the nation also thought, and burned into its memory for a century to come. Here we have the master-key to Cromwell's failure as constructive statesman.

CHAPTER III.

THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP.

With the dismissal of the first parliament a new era began. For twenty months the Protectorate was a system of despotic rule, as undisguised as that of Tudor or Stuart. Yet it was not the dictatorship of Elizabeth, for Cromwell shared authority both in name and fact with the Council, that is, with the leaders of the army. What were the working relations between Oliver and the eighteen men who composed his Council of State, and to what extent his policy was inspired or modified by them, we cannot confidently describe. That he had not autocratic power, the episode of the kingship in 1657 will show us. That his hand was forced on critical occasions, we know.

The latter half of 1654 has sometimes been called the grand epoch of Oliver's government. Ireland and Scotland were in good order; he had a surplus in the chest; the army and navy seemed loyal; his star was rising high among the European constellations. But below the surface lurked a thousand perils, and the difficulties of government were enormous. So hard must it inevitably be to carry on conservative policy without a conservative base of operations at any point

of the compass. Oliver had reproached his parliament with making themselves a shade under which weeds and nettles, briars and thorns, had thriven. They were like a man, he told them, who should protest about his liberty of walking abroad, or his right to take a journey, when all the time his house was in a blaze. The conspiracies against public order and the foundations of it were manifold. A serious plot for the Protector's assassination had been brought to light in the summer of 1654, and Gerard and Vowel, two of the conspirators, had been put to death for it. They were to fall upon him as he took his customary ride out from Whitehall to Hampton Court on a Saturday afternoon. The king across the water was aware of Gerard's design, and encouraged him in it in spite of some of his advisers who thought assassination impolitic. It was still a device in the manners of the age, and Oliver's share in the execution of the king was taken, in many minds to whom it might otherwise have been repugnant, in his case to justify sinister retaliation.

The schisms created in the republican camp by the dispersion of the old parliament and the erection of the Protectorate, naturally kindled new hopes in the breasts of the royalists. Charles, with the sanguine credulity common to pretenders, encouraged them. If those, he told them, who wished the same thing only knew each other's mind, the work would be done without any difficulty. The only condition needed was a handsome appearance of a rising in one place, and then the rest would assuredly not sit still. All through the last six months of 1654 the royalists were actively at work,

under the direction of leaders at home in communication with Charles abroad. With the new year, their hopes began to fade. The division common to all conspiracies broke out between the bold men and the prudent men. The royalist council in England, known as the Sealed Knot, told the king in February that things were quite unripe: that no rising in the army was to be looked for, and this had been the mainstay of their hopes; that the fleet was for the usurper; that insurrection would be their own destruction, and the consolidation of their foes. The fighting section on the other hand were equally ready to charge the Sealed Knot with being cold and backward. They pressed the point that Cromwell had full knowledge of the plot and of the men engaged in it, and that it would be harder for him to crush them now than later. Time would enable him to compose quarrels in his army, as he had so often composed them before. In the end the king put himself in the hands of the forward men, the conspiracy was pushed on, and at length in March the smouldering fire broke into a flickering and feeble flame. This is not the only time that an abortive and insignificant rising has proved to be the end of a widespread and dangerous combination. In Ireland we have not seldom seen the same, just as in the converse way formidable risings have followed what looked like insignificant conspiracies.

The Yorkshire royalists met on the historic ground of Marston Moor, and reckoned on surprising York with four thousand men: when the time came, a hundred made their appearance, and in despair they

flung away their arms and dispersed. In Northumberland the cavaliers were to seize Newcastle and Tynemouth, but here too less than a hundred of them ventured to the field. At Rufford in Sherwood Forest there was to have been a gathering of several hundreds, involving gentlemen of consequence; but on the appointed day, though horses and arms were ready, the country would not stir. At midnight the handful cried in a fright that they were betrayed, and made off as fast as they could. Designs were planned in Staffordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, but they came to nothing, and not a blow was struck. Every county in England, said Thurloe, instead of rising for them would have risen against them. The Protector, he declared, if there had been any need, could have drawn into the field within fourteen days, twenty thousand men, besides the standing army. 'So far are they mistaken who dream that the affections of this people are towards the House of Stuart.'[1]

The only momentary semblance of success was what is known as Penruddock's rising in the west. A band of Wiltshire royalists rode into Salisbury, seized in their beds the judges who happened to be on circuit, and the wilder blades were even for hanging them. But they could not get the greasy caps flung up for King Charles in Wilts, nor did better success await them in Dorset and Somerset. They were never more than four hundred. Even these numbers soon dwindled, and within three or four days a Cromwellian captain broke

[1] March 16, 1655. See Mr. Firth's examination of the rising in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* 1888, pp. 323-50; 1889, pp. 313-38, 525-35.

in upon them at South Molton, took most of them prisoners, and the others made off. Wagstaffe, one of the two principals, escaped to Holland, and Penruddock, the other, was put upon his trial along with a number of his confederates. It is curious that this was the first time that treason against the government had been submitted to juries since 1646, and the result justified the confident hopes of a good issue. Thirty-nine offenders were condemned, but some of them Cromwell reprieved, 'his course,' says Thurloe, 'being to use lenity rather than severity.' Only some fourteen or fifteen suffered death, including Penruddock.

In the army, though there was no disaffection, a mutinous section was little less busy than the royalists. Harrison, who had been in charge of King Charles on his fatal journey from Hurst Castle to Windsor, was now himself sent a prisoner to Carisbrooke. Wildman, who had been one of the extremist agitators so far back as 1647, was arrested, and the guard found him writing a 'declaration of the free and well-affected people of England now in arms against the tyrant Oliver Cromwell, Esquire.' It is no irrational document on the face of it, being little more than a restatement of the aims of the revolution for twelve years past. But it is not always palatable for men in power to be confronted with their aims in opposition.

The Protector spared no money in acquiring information. He expended immense sums in secret service, and little passed in the royalist camp abroad that was not discovered by the agents of Thurloe. Cecil and Walsingham were not more vigilant, or more successful

in their watch over the safety of Elizabeth, than was Cromwell's wise, trusty, and unwearied Secretary of State. Plotters were so amazed how the Lord Protector came to hear of all the things contrived against him, that they fell back on witchcraft and his familiarity with the devil. A gentleman got leave to travel, and had an interview with the king at Cologne one evening after dark. On his return, he saw the Protector, who asked him if he had kept his promise not to visit Charles Stuart. The gentleman answered that he had. But who was it, asked Cromwell, that put out the candles when you saw Charles Stuart? He further startled the traveller by asking whether Charles had not sent a letter by him. The gentleman denied, Cromwell took his hat, found a letter sewn up in the lining of it, and sent him to the Tower. Cromwell's informant was one Manning, and this transaction was his ruin. The royalists at Cologne suspected him, his rooms were searched, his cyphers discovered, and his correspondence read. Manning then made a clean breast of it, and excused his treason by his necessities, and the fact that he was to have twelve hundred pounds a year from Cromwell for his work. His only chance of life was a threat of retaliation by Cromwell on some royalist in prison in England, but this was not forthcoming, and Manning was shot dead by two gentlemen of the court in a wood near Cologne.

On every side the government struck vigorous blows. Especial watch was kept upon London. Orders were sent to the ports to be on guard against surprise, and to stop suspected persons. The military

forces were strengthened. Gatherings were put down. Many arbitrary arrests were made among minor persons and major; and many were sent to Barbadoes to a condition of qualified slavery. The upright and blameless Overton was arbitrarily flung into prison without trial, kept there for three years, and not released until after Cromwell's death and the revival of parliament. When that day arrived, both Thurloe and Barkstead, the governor of the Tower, quaked for the strong things that they had done on the personal authority of the Protector. The stories that came to be told in 1659 are a considerable deduction from Burke's praise of the admirable administration of the law under Cromwell. But though there was lawless severity, it did not often approach ferocity.

Subterranean plots and the risings of hot-headed country gentlemen were not all that Cromwell and the council had to encounter. The late parliament had passed no adequate vote of money. The government fell back upon its power of raising taxes by ordinance. The validity of the ordinance was disputed; the judges inclined to hold the objections good; and it looked for a moment as if a general refusal to pay customs and excise might bring the whole financial fabric to the ground. The three counsel for Cony, the merchant who had declined to pay the customs dues, were summoned before the Protector and the Council of State. After hearing what they had to say, Oliver signed a warrant for their committal to the Tower for using words tending to sedition and subversive of the government. Violation

of the spirit and letter of the law could go no further. They were soon set free, and Cromwell bore them no malice, but people not unreasonably saw in the proceeding a strong resemblance to the old Star Chamber. The judges were sent for, and humbly said something about Magna Charta. The Protector scoffed at Magna Charta with a mock too coarse for modern manners, declared that it should not control actions which he knew to be required by public safety, reminded them that it was he who made them judges, and bade them no more to suffer the lawyers to prate what it would not become them to hear. The judges may have been wrong either in their construction of the Instrument, or in their view that a section of the Instrument did not make a good law. But the committal of three counsel to prison by the executive, because their arguments were too good to be convenient, was certainly not good law whatever else it was. Judges who proved not complaisant enough were displaced. Sir Peter Wentworth, who had tried to brave Cromwell at the breaking up of the Long Parliament, tried to brave him now by bringing a suit against the tax collector. The Protector haled him before the Council; Wentworth said that he had been moved by his constant principle that no money could be levied but by consent of parliament. Cromwell commanded him to drop his suit, and Wentworth submitted.

The Protector never shrank in these days from putting his defence in all its breadth. 'If nothing should be done,' he said with scorn, 'but what is according to law, the throat of the nation may be

cut while we send for some one to make a law. It is a pitiful notion to think, though it be for ordinary government to live by law and rule—yet if a government in extraordinary circumstances go beyond the law, it is to be clamoured at and blottered at.' Sometimes he was not afraid to state the tyrant's plea even more broadly still. 'The ground of Necessity for justifying of men's actions, is above all considerations of instituted law, and if this or any other State should go about to make laws against events, against what *may* happen, then I think it is obvious to any man they will be making laws against Providence: events and issues of things being from God alone, to whom all issues belong.' As if all law were not in its essence a device against contingent cases. Nevertheless these pious disguises of what was really no more than common reason of state, just as reason of state is always used whether by bad men or by good, do not affect the fact that Cromwell in his heart knew the value of legality as well as anybody that ever held rule, only he was the least fortunate of men in effecting his aim.

'It was now,' says Oliver, 'we did find out a little poor invention, which I hear has been much regretted; I say there was a little thing invented, which was the erection of your Major-Generals.' This device had all the virtues of military simplicity. In the summer and autumn of 1655, England and Wales were mapped out into a dozen districts. Over each district was planted a major-general, Lambert, Desborough, Fleetwood, Skippon, Whalley, Barkstead, Goffe, and

the rest, all picked veterans and the trustiest of them. Their first duties were those of high police, to put down unlawful assemblies by force; to disarm papists and persons dangerous to the peace of the nation; to exact a bond from any householder considered to be disaffected for the good behaviour of his servants, and the servants were to appear before the major-general or his deputy wherever and whenever called upon. Persons in this category were to be registered, and if they changed their abode, the major-general was to be informed. Anybody coming from beyond the sea was to report himself, and his later movements were to be followed and recorded. The major-general was further to keep a sharp eye upon scandalous ministers, and to see that no disaffected person should take any share in the education of youth.

All this, however, was the least material part of the new policy. The case for the change rested on the danger of more daring plots and more important risings, the inadequateness of local justices and parish constables, the need of the central government for hands and eyes of its own, finally on the shadows of division in the army. There were those in the late parliament who thought the peril inconsiderable, but Thurloe tells us that 'his Highness saw a necessity of raising more force, and in every county, unless he would give up his cause to the enemy.' This involved a new standing militia for all the counties of England, and that again involved a new money charge. 'What so just as to put the charge upon those whose disaffection was the cause of it?' Such a plan needed

no more than the 'decimation' of those against whom, after personal inquisition made, they chose to set the mark of delinquency or disaffection. From such persons they were instructed to exact one-tenth of their annual income. For these exactions there was no pretence of law; nor could they be brought into the courts, the only appeal being to the Protector in Council. The parliament had been dissolved for meddling with the Instrument of Government. Yet all this was contrary to the Instrument. The scheme took some time to complete, but by the last three months of 1655 it was in full operation.

Two other remarkable measures of repression belong to this stern epoch. An edict was passed for securing the peace of the Commonwealth (November 1655), ordering that no ejected clergyman should be kept in any gentleman's house as chaplain or tutor, or teach in a school, or baptize, or celebrate marriages, or use the Prayer Book. That this was a superfluity of rigour is shown by the fact that it was never executed. It is probable that other measures of the time went equally beyond the real necessities of the crisis, for experience shows that nothing is ever so certain to be overdone as the policy of military repression against civil disaffection. The second measure was still more significant of the extent to which despotic reaction was going in the methods of the government. Orders were issued that no person whatever do presume to publish in print any matter of public news or intelligence without leave of the Secretary of State. The result of this was to reduce

the newspaper press in the capital of the country to a single journal coming out twice a week under two different names. Milton was still Latin Secretary, and it was only eleven years since the appearance of his immortal plea for unlicensed printing.

'Our ministers are bad,' one of the major-generals reports in 1655, 'our magistrates idle, and the people all asleep.' The new authorities set resolutely to work. They appointed Commissioners to assess the decimation of delinquents, not however without constant reference to the Protector and Council for directions how individuals were to be dealt with. The business of taxing the cavaliers in this high manner was 'of wonderful acceptation to all the parliament party, and men of all opinions joined heartily therein.' That men of one opinion should heartily rejoice at the compulsory exaction of rates and taxes from men of another opinion, is in accord with human nature: not that the activity of the major-generals prevented the imposition of a general property-tax in 1656. The cavaliers submitted with little ado. Wider irritation was created by stringent interference with ale-houses, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting. Lord Exeter came to ask Whalley whether he would allow the Lady Grantham cup to be run for at Lincoln, for if so, he would start a horse. 'I assured him,' reports Whalley to the Protector, 'that it was not your Highness' intention in the suppressing of horse-races, to abridge gentlemen of that sport, but to prevent the great confluences of irreconcilable enemies'; and Exeter had his race. Profane and

idle gentry whose lives were a shame to a Christian Commonwealth were hunted out, and the government were adjured to banish them. 'We have imprisoned here,' writes the choleric major-general in Shropshire, 'divers lewd fellows, some for having a hand in the plot, others of dissolute life, as persons dangerous to the peace of the nation: amongst others those papists who went a-hunting when they were sent for by Major Waring; they are desperate persons, and divers of them fit to grind sugar-cane or plant tobacco, and if some of them were sent into the Indies, it would do much good.' One personage when reprimanded warned the major-general that if he were sent to prison it would cause the godly to pour forth prayers and tears before the Lord. The officer staunchly replied that thousands of men in tears would never disquiet him, if he knew that he was doing his duty in the way of Providence.

The only defence of reason of state is success, and here the result soon proved to be not success but failure. While so many individuals and orders were exasperated, no great class of society was reconciled. Rigid order was kept, plotters were cowed, money was squeezed, but the keenest discontent was quickened in all those various organized bodies of men with lively minds and energetic interests, by whom in the long run effective public opinion in every community is generated. Oliver must soon have seen that his change of system would inevitably cut up his policy of healing and conciliation by its roots.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REACTION.

WANT of money has ever been the wholesome check on kings, on parliaments, on cabinets, and now in his turn it pinched the Protector. In spite of the decimation screw, the militia often went short of their pay, and suffered both trouble and jeers in consequence. Apart from the cost of domestic administration, Cromwell had embarked, as we shall see, on a course of intervention abroad; and he was soon in the same straits as those against which Strafford had long ago warned his master, as the sure result of a foreign policy to be paid for by discontented subjects. In June 1656, the Protector held a conference with his Council and some of the principal officers of the army. There were those who advised him to raise money on his own direct authority by forced loans or general taxation. There is reason to suppose that Cromwell himself leaned this way, for before long he chid the officers for urging the other course. The decision, however, was taken to call a new parliament.

The election that went forward during the summer of 1656 had all the rough animation of the age, and well deserves consideration. Thurloe writes to Henry

Cromwell that there is the greatest striving to get into parliament that ever was known; every faction is bestirring itself with all its might; and all sorts of discontented people are incessant in their endeavours. The major-generals on their side were active in electioneering arts, and their firmly expressed resignation to the will of over-ruling Providence did not hinder the most alert wire-pulling. They pressed candidates of the right colour, and gave broad hints as to any who were not sober and suitable to the present work. Every single major-general was himself a candidate and was elected. At Dover the rabble were strong for Cony, who had fought the case of the customs dues, and the major-general thought him likely to be elected unless he could be judiciously 'secluded.' At Preston, once the scene of perhaps the most critical of all Cromwell's victories, the major-general expected much thwarting, through the peevishness of friends and the disaffection of enemies. In Norwich an opposition preacher of great popularity was forbidden to go into the pulpit. A sharp eye was kept upon all printed matter finding its way through the post. Whalley reports that the heart is sound in what he calls the mediterranean part of the nation; people know that money will be wanted by the government, but they will not grudge it as the price of a settlement. At the same time he is unhappy lest Colonel Hutchinson or Sir Arthur Haselrig should get in, just as his superiors dreaded the return of Serjeant Bradshaw and Sir Henry Vane. Desborough is uneasy about the west, but he makes it his business to strengthen the

hands of the honest sober people, leaving the issue to the wise Disposer.

Norfolk was one of the most alarming cases. 'If other counties should do as this,' says the major-general, 'it would be a sufficient alarum to stand upon our guard, the spirit of the people being most strangely heightened and moulded into a very great aptness to take the first hint for an insurrection, and the county especially so disposed may most probably begin the scene.' He suggests that preparations for calling out the militia would be a sensible encouragement for the friends of the government. At Ipswich, when the writ was read, somebody rose and complained of the reference to his Highness's parliament; the king had never called it his parliament; and such an innovation should be a warning not to vote for swordmen nor for the Protector's friends; thereupon another called out that they were all his friends. One opposition candidate assured his audience that his Highness had sent for 3000 Swiss to be his bodyguard; that he had secretly sold the trade of England to the Dutch, and would grant no convoy from Holland; that most of the counties in England would bring up their numbers in thousands, in spite of Oliver and his redcoats; and that he would wager his life that not five hundred in the whole army would resist them. Another cry was that the free people of England would have no more swordmen, no more decimators, nor anybody in receipt of a salary from the state.

'On Monday last,' writes Goffe, 'I spoke with Mr. Cole of Southampton, whom I find to be a perfect

leveller—he is called by the name of Common Freedom. He told me he was where he was, and where the army was seven years ago, and pulled out of his pocket the *Agreement of the People.* He told me he would promise me not to disperse any of those books, and that it was his intention to live peaceable, for that he knew a war was not so easily ended as begun. Whereupon with the best exhortation I could give him, I dismissed him for the present. . . . Mr. Cole is very angry at the Spanish war, and saith we deal most ungratefully with them, for that they were so civil to us in the time of our late difference, and that all our trade will be lost.'

An energetic manifesto was put out against the government, stating with unusual force the reasons why dear Christian friends and brethren should bestir themselves in a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; why they should make a stand for the pure principles of free-born Englishmen against the power and pomp of any man, however high he might bear himself. Half the books in the Old Testament are made to supply examples and warnings, and Hezekiah and Sennacherib, Jethro and Moses, Esther, Uzzah, Absalom, are all turned into lessons of what a voter should do or abstain from doing. The whole piece gives an instructive glimpse of the state of mind of the generation. Earnest remonstrances are addressed to those who think that God has gone out of parliaments, and that the time for Christ's kingdom is come. Others hold that the Protector had at least given them liberty of conscience in worshipping God, a thing worth all else put together, and a thing that parliament might

very likely take away. Some again insist that elections are of no purpose, because the Protector with his red-coats will very soon either make members do what he wants, or else pack them off home again. All these partisans of abstention—the despair of party managers in every age—are faithfully dealt with, and the manifesto closes with the hackneyed asseverations of all oppositions ancient and modern, that if only the right sort of parliament were returned burdens would be eased, trade would revive, and the honour of the country now lying in the dust among all nations would be immediately restored. Did not their imprisoned friends speak? Did not their banished neighbours speak? Did not their infringed rights speak? Did not their invaded properties speak? Did not their affronted representatives, who had been trodden upon with scorn, speak? Did not the blood of many thousands speak, some slain with the sword, others killed with hunger—witness Jamaica? Did not the cries of their honest seamen speak, the wall and bulwark of our nation, and now so barbarously forced from wives and children, to serve the ambitions and fruitless designs of one man?

By way of antidote, the major-generals were armed with letters from the Protector and instructions from Thurloe, and any one found in possession of a bundle of the seditious documents was quickly called to sharp account Earlier in the summer Sir Henry Vane had put out a pamphlet without his name, which at first was popular, and then on second thoughts was found impracticable, because it simply aimed at the restora-

tion of the Long Parliament. Vane was haled before the Council (21st August), where he admitted the writing and publishing of the *Healing Question*, though in dark and mysterious terms, as his manner was. He was ordered to give security, refused, and was sent to prison at Carisbrooke, where he lay until the end of the year. An attempt was made to punish Bradshaw by removing him from his office of Chief Justice of Cheshire, but the Council changed their mind. The well-directed activity of the major-general was enough to prevent Bradshaw's return for that county, and he failed elsewhere. So the Protector was free of those who passed for the two leading incendiaries.

The parliament met in September 1656, and Oliver addressed it in one of his most characteristic speeches. He appealed at great length to the hatred of Spain, on the standing ground of its bondage to the Pope; for its evil doings upon Englishmen in the West Indies, for its espousal of the Stuart interest. Then he turned to the unholy friendliness at home between papists, all of them 'Spaniolised,' and cavaliers; between some of the republicans and the royalists; between some of the commonwealth men and some of the mire and dirt thrown up by the revolutionary waters. He recalled all the plots and the risings and attempted risings, and warned them against the indolent supposition that such things were no more than the nibbling of a mouse at one's heel. For the major-generals and their decimation of royalist delinquents, he set up a stout defence. Why was it not righteous to make that party pay for the suppression of disorder, which had made the charge

necessary? Apart from the mere preservation of the peace, was it not true that the major-generals had been more effectual for discountenancing vice and settling religion than anything done these fifty years? The mark of the cavalier interest was profaneness, disorder, and wickedness; the profane nobility and gentry, that was the interest that his officers had been engaged against. 'If it lives in us, I say, if it be in the general heart, it is a thing I am confident our liberty and prosperity depend upon—reformation of manners. By this you will be more repairer of breaches than by anything in the world. Truly these things do respect *the souls of men and the spirits— which are the men. The mind is the man.* If that be kept pure, a man signifies somewhat; if not, I would very fain see what difference there is between him and a beast.'

In the mighty task that was laid upon them, it was no neutral or Laodicean spirit that would do. With the instinct of a moral leader, with something more than trick of debate or a turn for tactics, Cromwell told them, 'Doubting, hesitating men, they are not fit for your work. You must not expect that men of hesitating spirits, under the bondage of scruples, will be able to carry on this work. Do not think that men of this sort will ever rise to such a spiritual heat for the nation as shall carry you a cause like this; as will meet all the oppositions that the devil and wicked men can make.' Then he winds up with three high passages from the Psalms, with no particular bearing on their session, but in those days well fitted to exalt men's hearts, and surrounding temporal anxieties of

the hour with radiant visions from another sphere for edification of the diviner mind.

Of the real cause of their assembling, deficit and debt, the Protector judiciously said little. As he observed of himself on another occasion—and the double admission deserves to be carefully marked—he was not much better skilled in arithmetic than he was in law, and his statement of accounts would certainly not satisfy the standards of a modern exchequer. Incapacity of legal apprehension, and incapacity in finance, are a terrible drawback in a statesman with a new state to build. Before business began, the Protector took precautions after his own fashion against the opposition critics. He and the Council had already pondered the list of members returned to the parliament, and as the gentlemen made their way from the Painted Chamber to their House, soldiers were found guarding the door. There was no attempt to hide the iron hand in velvet glove. The clerk of the Commonwealth was planted in the lobby with certificates of the approval of the Council of State. Nearly a hundred found no such tickets, and for them there was no admission. This strong act of purification was legal under the Instrument, and the House, when it was reported, was content with making an order that the persons shut out should apply to the Council for its approbation. The excluded members, of whose fidelity to his government Cromwell could not be sure, comprised a faithful remnant of the Long Parliament; and they and others, ninety-three in number, signed a remonstrance in terms that are a

strident echo of the protests that had so often been launched in old days against the king. Vehemently they denounced the practice of the tyrant to use the name of God and religion and formal fasts and prayer, to colour the blackness of the fact; and to command one hundred, two hundred, or three hundred to depart, and to call the rest a parliament by way of countenancing his oppression. The present assembly at Westminster, they protested, sits under the daily awe and terror of the Lord Protector's armed men, not daring to consult or debate freely the great concernments of their country, nor daring to oppose his usurpation and oppression, and no such assembly can be the representative body of England. We may be sure that if such was the temper of nearly one-fourth of a parliament that was itself just chosen under close restrictions, this remonstrance gives a striking indication of how little way had even yet been made by Cromwell in converting popular opinion to his support.

CHAPTER V.

CHANGE OF TACK.

THE parliament speedily showed signs that, winnowed and sifted as it had been, and loyally as it always meant to stand to the person of the Protector, yet like the Long Parliament, like the Barebones Convention, and like the first parliament under the Instrument, all of them one after another banished in disgrace, it was resolved not to be a cypher in the constitution, but was full of that spirit of corporate self-esteem without which any parliament is a body void of soul. The elections had taught them that the rule of the swordmen and the decimators was odious even to the honest party in the country. Oliver anxiously watching the signs of public feeling had probably learned the same lesson, that his major-generals were a source of weakness and not of strength to his government. The hour had come when the long struggle between army and parliament which in various forms had covered nine troubled years, was to enter a fresh and closing phase. The nation whether royalist or puritan had shown itself as a whole bitterly averse to the transformation of the ancient realm of England into a military state, and with this aversion, even from the

early days of barrack debates at Windsor and Putney, Oliver was in perfect sympathy. Neither the habitudes of the camp, nor the fact that his own power, which he rightly identified with public order, had always depended and must still depend upon the army, dulled his instinct or weakened his desire that the three kingdoms should be welded, not into a soldier state, but into a civil constitution solidly reposing on its acceptance by the nation. We cannot confidently divine the workings of that capacious, slow, and subtle mind, but this quickened perception seems to be the key to the dramatic episode that was now approaching.

The opportunity for disclosing the resolve of the parliament to try a fall with the military power soon came. It was preceded by an incident that revealed one of the dangers, so well known to Oliver, and viewed by him with such sincere alarm, as attending any kind of free parliament whether this or another. The general objects of the new parliament of 1656, like the objects of its immediate predecessor of 1654, were to widen the powers of parliament, to limit those of the Protector, to curb the soldiers, and finally, although this was kept in discreet shade, to narrow the area of religious tolerance. A test of tolerance occurred almost at once. Excesses of religious emotion were always a sore point with protestant reformers, for all such excesses seemed a warrant for the bitter predictions of the catholics at the Reformation, that to break with the church was to open the floodgates of extravagance and blasphemy in the heart

of unregenerate man. Hence nobody was so infuriated as the partisan of private judgment, with those who carried private judgment beyond a permitted point.

James Naylor was an extreme example of the mystics whom the hard children of this world dismiss as crazy fanatics. For several years he had fought with good repute in the parliamentary army, and he was present on the memorable day of Dunbar. Then he joined George Fox, by and by carried Quaker principles to a higher pitch, and in time gave to his faith a personal turn by allowing enthusiastic disciples to salute him as the Messiah. In October 1656 he rode into Bristol, attended by a crowd of frantic devotees, some of them casting branches on the road, all chanting loud hosannas, several even vowing that he had miraculously raised them from the dead. For his share in these transactions, Naylor was brought before a committee of parliament. No sworn evidence was taken. Nobody proved that he had spoken a word. The worst that could be alleged was that he had taken part in a hideous parody. The House found that he was guilty of blasphemy, that he was a grand impostor, and a seducer of the people. It was actually proposed to inflict the capital sentence, and the offender only escaped death by a majority of fourteen, in a division of a hundred and seventy-eight members. The debate lasted over many days. The sentence finally imposed was this:—To stand in the pillory two hours at Westminster; to be whipped by the hangman from Westminster to the old Exchange,

and there to undergo another two hours of pillory; to have his tongue bored through with a hot iron; to be branded on the brow with the letter B; then to be sent to Bristol, carried on a horse barebacked with his face to the tail, and there again whipped in the market-place; thence to be brought back to London, to be put into solitary confinement with hard labour during the pleasure of parliament, without use of pen, ink, or paper. So hideous a thing could puritanism be, so little was there in many respects to choose between the spirit of Laud and the hard hearts of the people who cut off Laud's head.

Cromwell showed his noblest quality. The year before, he had interposed by executive act to remove John Biddle, charged with Socinian heresy, from the grasp of the courts. Cromwell denounced the blasphemy of denying the godhead of Jesus Christ, but he secluded Biddle from harm by sending him to Scilly with an allowance of ten shillings a week and a supply of books. So now in Naylor's case he hated the cruelty, and he saw the mischief of the assumption by parliament of the function of a court of law. The most ardent friends of parliament must still read with a lively thrill the words that Oliver now addressed to the Speaker: 'Having taken notice of a judgment lately given by yourselves against one James Naylor; although we detest and abhor the giving or occasioning the least countenance to persons of such opinions and practice. . . . Yet we, being interested in the present government on behalf of the people of these nations; and not knowing how

far such proceeding, entered into wholly without us, may extend in the consequence of it—Do desire that the House will let us know the grounds and reasons whereupon they have proceeded' (Dec. 12, 1656). This rebuke notwithstanding, the execrable sentence was carried out to the letter. It galled Cromwell to find that under the Instrument he had no power to interfere with the parliamentary assumption of judicial attributes, and this became an additional reason for that grand constitutional revision which was now coming into sight.

A few days after the disposal of Naylor, a bill was brought in that raised the great question of the major-generals, their arbitrary power, and their unlawful decimations. By the new bill the system was to be continued. The lawyers argued strongly against it, and the members of the Council of State and the major-generals themselves were of course as strongly for it. The debate was long and heated, for both sides understood that the issue was grave. When the final division was taken, the bill was thrown out by a majority of 36 in a House of 212. One curious result of the legislative union of the three kingdoms of which the world has heard only too much in later days, was now first noted. 'The major-generals are much offended at the Irish and Scottish members, who, being much united, do sway exceedingly by their votes. I hope it will be for the best; or if the proverb be true that the fox fares best when he is curst, those that serve for Ireland will bring home some good things for their country.'

No catholics were either electors or eligible, and the Irish who thus helped to hold the balance were the colonists from England and Scotland.

'Some gentlemen,' Thurloe tells Henry Cromwell, 'do think themselves much trampled upon by this vote against their bill, and are extremely sensible thereof.' That is to say, most of the major-generals, with the popular and able Lambert at their head, recognised that the vote was nothing less than a formal decision against the army and its influences. So bold a challenge from a parliament in whose election and purification they had taken so prominent a part roused sharp anger, and the consequences of it were immediately visible in the next and more startling move. Cromwell's share in either this first event, or in that which now followed, is as obscure as his share in the removal of the king from Holmby, or in Pride's Purge, or in the resolve to put Charles to death. The impression among the leaders of the army undoubtedly seems to have been that in allowing the recent vote, the Lord Protector had in effect thrown his major-generals over.

As we are always repeating to ourselves, Cromwell from 1647 had shown himself ready to follow events rather than go before. He was sometimes a constitutional ruler, sometimes a dictator, sometimes the agent of the barrack, each in turn as events appeared to point and to demand. Now he reverted to the part of constitutional ruler. The elections and the parliament showed him that the 'little invention' of the major-generals had been a mistake, but he was

not so sure of this as to say it. Ominous things happened. Desborough, his brother-in-law, brought in the bill, but Claypole, his son-in-law, was the first to oppose it. Another kinsman in the House denounced the major-generals roundly. People told him he would get a rating when next he visited Whitehall. Nothing daunted, he repaired to the Protector, and stood to what he had said with papers to prove his case. His Highness answered him with raillery, and taking a rich scarlet cloak from his back and gloves from his hands threw them to his kinsman (Henry Cromwell), 'who strutted in the House in his new finery next day, to the great satisfaction and delight of some, and trouble of others.' Parliaments are easily electrified by small incidents, and men felt that a new chapter was about to open. It was evident that Cromwell, who had only a few days before so strongly defended the major-generals, was now for sailing on a fresh tack.

About this time (May 1657) was published the pamphlet with the famous title of *Killing no Murder*. It sets out with truculent vigour the arguments for death to tyrants, with a direct and deadly exhortation to apply them to the case of the Lord Protector. The arguments had been familiar enough in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and though the writer does not forget Ehud and Eglon, Jehoiada and Athaliah, he has much to say from pagans like Aristotle, Tacitus, Cicero, and Machiavelli. 'Had not his Highness,' he says, 'been fluent in his tears and had a supple conscience; and besides had to do with

a people of great faith but little wit, his courage and the rest of his moral virtues, with the help of his janissaries, had never been able so far to advance him out of the reach of justice, that we should have need to call for any other hand to remove him but that of the hangman.' The royalists did not conceal their approval of this doctrine of dagger and pistol. It is a most excellent treatise, says Nicholas, the king's Secretary of State. Cromwell had no more right to law, they said, than a wolf or a fox; and the exiles found comfort in telling one another that the Protector went about in as much fright as Cain after he had murdered Abel. A few weeks before this pungent incitement began to circulate, its author had almost succeeded in a design that would have made pamphlets superfluous. Sexby, whom Cromwell had described at the opening of the new parliament as a wretched creature, an apostate from all honour and honesty, one of the republicans whom Oliver's later proceedings had turned into a relentless enemy, was deep in plots with royalists abroad and even with the Spaniards against the life of the Protector. Diligent watch was kept upon Sexby, and for long his foreign employers got nothing for their money. At length he secured a confederate as determined as himself and less well known to Thurloe's police, in Miles Sindercombe, an old trooper of Monk's, and a hater of tyrants rather after Roman than Hebrew example. Sindercombe dogged the Protector with a pistol in his pocket, took a lodging in the road between Whitehall and Hampton Court where Oliver

passed every week, offered bribes to the guards, and at last his pertinacity came very near to success in a plan for setting fire to the Protector's apartments in Whitehall. He was arrested, brought before a jury—a substantial body of men, most of them justices of the peace—and was condemned. He died in his bed in the Tower the night before the execution. Sexby said that the Governor had smothered him, but he afterwards admitted that this was a fabrication. The evidence went to show that some mineral poison had been secretly conveyed to Sindercombe by three women who had been allowed to visit him.

This dangerous plot was exploded in January (1657), and the Protector's narrow escape made a profound impression on the public mind. It awoke sober men, who are a majority in most countries when opportunity gives them a chance, to the fact that only Oliver's life stood between them and either anarchy on the one hand, or a vindictive restoration on the other. Another design of the same sort came to light not long after. An obscure design of a few score of the extreme Fifth Monarchy men was discovered in the east of London in the month of April. Venner, a cooper, was the leading spirit; his confederates were of mean station, and they appear to have had the same organization of circles and centres that marks the more squalid of modern secret societies. They had no coherent political ideas, but they spoke desperate things about the murder of the Protector, and Thurloe, with the natural instinct of the head of a criminal investigation department, was persuaded

that stronger hands and heads were in the plot, and thought of Harrison, Rich, and Okey. The government had long known all about it, and at the proper moment laid its hand upon the plotters. The opponents of the alterations in the government professed to think that these alterations were the source of the conspiracy, and tried to make a little political capital out of the discontent which it was supposed to indicate in the honest party. The truth is, says the sage Thurloe, there is a sort of men who will never rest so long as they see troubled waters, and suppose a chance of carrying out their foolish principles. Venner's plot was not of much more serious consequence than the plot against Charles II. for which the same Venner was hanged four years later, but it now heightened the general excitement.

The confusion of the sects may have involved less direct political peril than some of the government supposed, but it marked a social chaos without a parallel. Oliver was denounced as the Serpent, the Beast, the Bastard of Ashdod. The saints, on the other hand, were engaged on Life and Death to stand or fall with the Lord Jesus, their Captain-General on his Red Horse, against the Beast's government. Cromwell was infinitely patient and even sympathetic with the most fanatical of them. He could not bear to quarrel with the brave and open-hearted Harrison. He sent for him to Whitehall, gave him a handsome feast, and then discharged the duty of a friend by admonishing him to quit deceitful and slippery ways. Like the sensible statesman that he was, he always

liked to carry as many of his old friends with him as he could; only if they would not go with him, then he went on alone.

Towards 1654 the Quakers had entered into history. It was indeed high time, for the worst of puritanism seemed that in so many of its phases it dropped out the Sermon on the Mount, and left the best texts in the New Testament to Arianising heretics. Militant puritanism was often only half-Christian. Quakerism has undergone many developments, but in all of them it has been the most devout of all endeavours to turn Christianity into the religion of Christ. In uncouth phrases but with glowing souls, they carried to its furthest point the protest against outer form and ceremonial as degrading to the life of the spirit. They fell in with the corresponding principle of antagonism to powers and institutions as hindrances to human freedom. No other sect so alarmed and exasperated the authorities, for much the same military and political reasons as had made statesmen persecute the Christian professors in the early days of imperial Rome. Cromwell treated them as kindly as he could. He listened in his chamber at Whitehall with attention and emotion to one of George Fox's exhortations, saying, 'That is very good,' or 'That is true,' and when they parted Cromwell said to him, 'Come again to my house; if thou and I were but an hour of the day together, we should be nearer one to the other. I wish no more harm to thee than I do to my own soul.' When Fox lay in prison, a friend went to Cromwell and begged to be allowed to suffer in his stead. The

Protector answered that it was contrary to the law, 'and turning to his council, "Which of you," quoth he, "would do as much for me if I were in the same condition?"'

Notwithstanding his own good-will, the Quakers suffered much bitter usage from county justices, from judges, and from military officers. The Friends complained that justices delighted in tendering to them the oath of abjuration, knowing that they could not take it, and so designing to make a spoil of them. 'It was never intended for them,' cried Oliver, 'I never so intended it.' When they were harshly punished for refusing to pay their tithe, Oliver disclaimed all share in such severities, and assured them that all persecution and cruelty was against his mind. Thurloe, on the other hand, who represented that secular spirit which is so apt to be the counterfeit of statesmanship, saw in the Quakers foes of civil government, and regarded them as the most serious enemies they had. The chapter of Quaker persecution must be considered a dark blot on the administration of the Protectorate, though from no intention in Cromwell.

A curious interview is recorded (1654) between the Protector and some of his angry critics. John Rogers had denounced him from the pulpit, and written pamphlets lamenting over Oliver, Lord Cromwell, from that most useful of all texts, the everlasting *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*; and for these and other proceedings he was arrested. Cromwell admitted Rogers and a crowd of followers to an audience. Before they reached him

they were struck, hustled, and abused as a pack of cursed dogs and damned rogues by the guards downstairs. When they came to the presence, 'The Great Man had with him two gentlemen more, who stood by the fireside, and a pistol lay prepared at the window where he himself at first was. Then he came to the fireside in great majesty, without moving or showing the least civility of a man, though all stood bare to him and gave respect.' Cromwell listened to them with rough good-nature, trying with homely banter to bring them to the point. 'I believe you speak many things according to the Gospel, but what you suffer for is railing and evil-doing,' and so forth, like a good-humoured police magistrate trying to bring street preachers to reason for blocking the thoroughfare.

Even with Anglicanism, he was, in spite of the ordinance of 1656, for fair play. A deputation of London ministers waited upon the Protector and complained that the episcopal clergy got their congregations away from them. 'Have they so,' said Oliver, making as if he would say something to the captain of the guard. 'But hold,' said he, 'after what manner do the cavaliers debauch your people?' 'By preaching,' said the ministers. 'Then preach back again,' said Oliver, and so left them to their reflections. Yet Cromwell's tolerance did not prevent a major-general from sending the harmless and virtuous Jeremy Taylor arbitrarily to prison.

Cromwell's importance in church history has been said to rest on this, that he brought anabaptism or enthusiasm, one of the marked epochs of that history,

to its close. 'In him, its greatest leader, anabaptism reaches its climax, and yet it is by his action that anabaptism ceases to be a historic force. Henceforth it loses the universal significance that it has possessed for two centuries. Its political, like its general reforming influence, is at an end, and its religious inspirations close.'[1] When Mazarin (1656) pressed for the same toleration for catholics in England as was asked for protestants abroad, the Protector replied that he believed Mazarin had less reason to complain of rigour on men's consciences under him than under the parliament. 'And herein it is my purpose as soon as I can remove impediments to make a further progress,' but 'I may not (shall I tell you I cannot) at this juncture of time answer your call for toleration; I say I cannot, as to a public declaration of my sense on that point.' As constable of the parish Cromwell's power was only limited by the council of officers, but national leadership in the field of opinion he did not possess. In 1655 a retrograde proclamation was issued for the execution of the laws against Jesuits and priests, and for the conviction of popish recusants. Sensible men like Whitelocke protested that it was not needed, and little came of it. In 1651 Peter Wright, a priest, was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, along with a group of ordinary criminals, for seducing the people, and in 1654 another priest, John Southworth, an old man of seventy-two, suffered the same fate for the same offence. In 1657 the independents, whose political existence had begun with their protest for

[1] Weingarten, p. 158.

toleration, passed an act by which anybody over sixteen suspected of being a papist might be called upon to abjure the leading articles of catholic belief, and if he failed to purge himself should forfeit two-thirds of his property. From this flagitious law the Protector did not withhold his assent. It was one of the last legislative performances of the Cromwellian parliament.

The Jews had been banished by law from England since the end of the thirteenth century, yet it is pretty certain that their presence was not entirely unknown in either country or town. Shakespeare and Marlowe had made dark figures of them on the stage, though Shakespeare's glorious humanity had put into the mouth of Shylock one of the most pathetic appeals in all literature against the cruelty of racial and theologic hate. Puritanism itself was impregnated with ideas, language, argument, and history, all borrowed from Jewish antiquity and sacred books. Roger Williams, most unswerving of the advocates of toleration, argued strongly for breaking down the wall of superstition between Jew and Gentile. Stern men like Whalley saw reasons both of religion and policy why Jews should be admitted, for they would bring much wealth into the State, and they would be all the more likely to be converted. Cromwell with great earnestness held the same view, yet though the question was debated candidly and without heat, opinion in his Council was divided. In the end all that he felt himself able to do was to grant a certain number of private dispensations to individuals, and to connive at a small synagogue and a cemetery. It was

enough to show him on the side of freedom, pity, and light. But the tolerance of the puritanism around him was still strictly limited. It would be graceless indeed to underestimate or forget the debt we owe to both Quakers and independents: they it was who at a critical time made liberty of conscience a broad, an actual, and a fighting issue. Yet it was from a rising spirit of rationalism, and neither from liberal Anglicans like Taylor, nor from liberal puritans like Cromwell and Milton, that the central stream of toleration flowed, with strength enough in time to mitigate law and pervade opinion in the nation.

CHAPTER VI.

KINGSHIP.

'He entered the sanctuary,' says Cardinal de Retz of a French politician, 'he lifted the veil that should always cover everything that can be said or can be believed, as to the right of peoples and the right of kings—rights that never agree so well together as in unbroken silence.' This was the root of the difficulties that for nine years baffled the energy of Cromwell. The old monarchy had a mystic as well as a historical foundation. The soldier's monarchy, though Cromwell believed it to rest upon the direct will of heaven, yet could only be established on positive and practical foundations, and these must of necessity be laid in face of jealous discussion, without the curtain of convention to screen the builders.

Meanwhile a new and striking scene was opening. The breakdown of military rule, consternation caused by plot upon plot, the fact that four years of dictatorship had brought settlement no nearer, all gave an irresistible impetus to the desire to try fresh paths. Sir Christopher Packe, an active and influential representative of the city of London and once Lord Mayor, startled the House one day (Feb. 23, 1657)

by asking leave to bring forward a proposal for a new government, in which the chief magistrate was to take upon himself the title of king, and the parliament was to consist of two Houses. Violent controversy immediately broke out, and Packe was even hustled to the bar to answer for his boldness. The storm quickly died down; he had only precipitated a move for which the mind of the House was ready; leave was given to read his paper; and the Humble Petition and Advice, as that paper came in time to be called, absorbed the whole attention of the public for four months to come.

That Cromwell should have had no share in such a step as this may seem incredible in view of the immense power in his hands, and of his supreme command over popular imagination. Yet the whole proceeding was obviously a censure of some of his most decisive acts. He had applauded the Instrument of Government that had made him Protector. The Instrument was now to be remodelled, if not overthrown. He had broken the first parliament of the protectorate for wasting its time on constitutional reform; yet constitutional reform was the very task that his second parliament was now setting about more earnestly than ever. He had tried government by major-generals, and exacted taxes for which no sanction was given by law. That system was swept away, and in the new project a clause was passed against taxation without consent of parliament, stringent enough to satisfy the sternest of popular reformers. Only six months ago he had shut

the doors of the House against a hundred duly elected members; and in the previous parliament he had in the same way insisted that no member should sit who had not signed a recognition of Oliver's authority. All these high-handed acts were now formally stamped as wrong. It was laid down that persons legally chosen by free election could only be excluded from parliament by judgment and consent of that House whereof they were members. The substitution of the title of King for Protector was therefore the least part of the matter. The real question that must have weighed upon Cromwell was whether the greater title did not carry with it lessened power; whether, although his style and dignity were undoubtedly exalted, the exaltation in substance was not rather that of the parliament. Assent to a change in name and form was at bottom a revolution in policy, and in this revolution with all that it involved, Cromwell slowly, ponderously, and after long periods of doubt and misgivings decided to acquiesce. Yet the change of title was a momentous thing in itself, in the eyes alike of those who sought it and those who resisted. The strongest advocates of the kingship were the lawyers, that powerful profession of which historians and politicians do not always recognise the permeating influence even through the motions of revolutionary politics. The lawyers argued for a king, and their points were cogent. The office of a king, they said, is interwoven with the whole body of the law and the whole working of national institutions. The prerogatives of a king with all their

limits and dimensions are well understood, but who can define the rights or the duties of a Protector? The people, again, only love what they know; and what they know is the crown, the ancient symbol of order, unity, and rule. These were sound arguments, appealing to Cromwell's conservative instincts. The only argument by which he could have refuted them was a demonstration that the Protectorate had brought a settlement, and this was just what the Protectorate had as yet notoriously failed to do. It is impossible not to believe that in this crisis of things Cromwell had convinced himself that the lawyers were right.

From the balance of argument he turned, as statesmen must or should, to the balance of forces; to that formidable host of armed men whom he had welded into the most powerful military instrument in Europe, whom he had led to one victory after another in nine years of toil and peril, whom he had followed rather than led in all the successive stages of their revolutionary fervour, whose enthusiasms were the breath of his nostrils. How would these stern warriors view the sight of their chief putting on the mantle of that hated office and title which they had been taught to regard as the ensigns of bondage, and against which the Lord of Hosts had borne such crushing witness? Well might Oliver say, that he had lived all the latter part of his life in the fire, in the midst of troubles, and that all the things together that had befallen him since he was first engaged in the affairs of the Commonwealth could not so move his heart and spirit as did this proposal.

With angry promptness the officers showed their teeth. Lambert and others of the military leaders instantly declared against the new design. Within three days of Packe's announcement, a hundred of them waited on the Protector, and besought him not to listen to the proffer of the crown. It would displease the army, and the godly; it would be a danger to the nation and to his own person; it would one day bring back the exiled line. Cromwell dealt very faithfully with them in reply. He liked the title as little as they liked it, a mere feather in a hat, a toy for a child. But had they not themselves proposed it in the Instrument? Here he glanced at Lambert, formerly the main author of such a proposal in 1653, and now in 1657 the main instigator of opposition. Cromwell continued in the same vein of energetic remonstrance, like a man wearied, as he said, of being on all occasions made a drudge. Strangely does he light up the past. His reply was a double arraignment of himself and of them for the most important things that both of them had done. He said it was they who had made him dissolve the Long Parliament. It was they who had named the convention that followed, which went to such fantastic lengths that nobody could be sure of calling anything his own. It was they who had pressed him to starve out the ministers of religion. Was it not they too who must needs dissolve the parliament in 1655 for trying to mend the Instrument, as if the Instrument did not need to be mended? They had thought it necessary to have major-generals, and the major-generals did their part

well. Then after that, nothing would content them till a parliament was called. He gave his vote against it, but they were confident that somehow they would get men chosen to their heart's desire. How they had failed therein, and how much the country had been disobliged, was only too well known. Among other things, this string of reproaches helps to explain the curious remark of Henry Cromwell while walking in the garden of Ludlow's country house at Monkstown in Dublin Bay. 'You that are here,' he said, 'may think that my father has power, but they make a very kickshaw of him at London.'

Oliver's rebuke made the impression that he had calculated. Time was gained, and a compromise agreed to. The question of the kingly title was postponed until the end of the bill, and the rest of its proposals went forward in order. On any view this delay on Cromwell's part was a piece of sound tactics. Those who would not have valued the other reforms without a king as keystone of the reconstructed arch, assented to the reforms in the hope that kingship would follow. Those who hated the kingship, pressed for enlargement of the constitution with the hope that the question of the crown would drop. When the clause was at last reached (March 25), the title of king was carried by 123 to 62. Operations in the House were completed by the end of March, and on the last day of the month (1657) the new constitution engrossed on vellum was submitted to the Protector at Whitehall. He replied in a tone of dignity not without pathos, that it was the greatest

weight of anything that was ever laid upon a man; that he might perhaps be at the end of his work; that were he to make a mistake in judgment here, it were better that he had never been born; and that he must take time for the utmost deliberation and consideration. Then began a series of parleys and conferences that lasted for the whole of the month of April, with endless dubitancies, postponements, and adjournments, iteration and reiteration of arguments. Cromwell's speeches were found 'dark and promiscuous,' nor can a modern reader wonder; and he undoubtedly showed extraordinary readiness in keeping off the point and baulking the eager interlocutor. One passage (April 13) is famous. He told them that he had undertaken his position originally not so much out of a hope of doing any good, as from a desire to prevent mischief and evil. 'For truly I have often thought that I could not tell what my business was, nor what I was in the place I stood in, save comparing myself to a good constable set to keep the peace of the parish.' That, he said, had been his content and satisfaction in all the troubles he had undergone, that they still had peace. Nobody any longer doubts that this homely image was the whole truth. The question was whether the constable's truncheon should now be struck from his hand, or more boldly grasped. Time after time they parted, in the words of Clarendon, 'all men standing at gaze and in terrible suspense according to their several hopes and fears, till they knew what he would determine. All the dispute was now within his own chamber, and there is no question that

the man was in great agony, and in his own mind he did heartily desire to be king, and thought it the only way to be safe.'

The feeling of his friends may be gathered from Henry Cromwell, then in Ireland. 'I look on some of them,' he said, speaking of the 'contrariant' officers, as 'vainly arrogating to themselves too great a share in his Highness' government, and to have too big an opinion of their own merit in subverting the old.' He thinks the gaudy feather in the hat of authority a matter of little concern either way. If the army men were foolish in resenting it with so much heat, the heat of those who insisted on it was foolish too. Whether the gaudy feather decked the hat or not, anything would be better than the loss of the scheme as a whole; the scheme was good in itself, and its loss would puff up the contrariants and make it easier for them, still remaining in power as they would remain, to have their own way. It is plain that the present dissension on the kingship was an explosion of griefs and jealousies that were not new.

At last Cromwell declared to several members, that he was resolved to accept. Lambert, Desborough, and Fleetwood warned him that if he did, they must withdraw from all public employment, and that other officers of quality would certainly go with them. Desborough happening, after he knew the momentous decision, to meet Colonel Pride, told him that Cromwell had made up his mind to accept the crown. 'That he shall not,' said the unfaltering Pride. 'Why,' asked the other, 'how wilt thou

hinder it?' 'Get me a petition drawn,' answered Pride, 'and I will prevent it.' The petition was drawn, and on the day when the House was expecting Oliver's assent, a group of seven-and-twenty officers appeared at the bar with the prayer that they should not press the kingship any further. Pride's confidence in the effect of a remonstrance from the officers was justified by the event. When news of this daring move against both the determination of the Protector, and the strong feeling of the parliament, reached Whitehall, Cromwell was reported as extremely angry, calling it a high breach of privilege, and the greatest injury they could have offered him short of cutting his throat. He sent for Fleetwood, reproached him for allowing things to go so far, while knowing so well that without the assent of the army he was decided against the kingship; and bade him go immediately to Westminster to stay further proceedings on the petition, and instantly invite the House to come to Whitehall to hear his definite reply. They came. He gave his decision in a short, firm speech, to the effect that if he accepted the kingship, at the best he should do it doubtingly, and assuredly whatever was done doubtingly was not of faith. 'I cannot,' he said, 'undertake this government with the title of king; and that is mine answer to this great and weighty business.' This was all he said, but everybody knew that he had suffered his first repulse, a wound in the house of his friend. He set his mark on those who had withstood him, and Lambert was speedily dismissed. It is not easy to

explain why, if Cromwell did not fear to exile Lambert from place, as he had not feared to send Harrison to prison, he should not have held to his course in reliance on his own authority in the army. Clarendon supposes his courage for once to have failed, and his genius to have forsaken him. Swift, in that whimsical list of Mean and Great Figures made by several persons in some particular action of their lives, counts Cromwell a great figure when he quelled a mutiny in Hyde Park, and a mean one the day when out of fear he refused the kingship. As usual, Cromwell was more politic than the army. It is strange that some who eulogise him as a great conservative statesman, yet eulogise with equal fervour the political sagacity of the army, who as a matter of fact resisted almost every conservative step that he wished to take, while they hurried him on to all those revolutionary steps to which he was most averse. However this may be, we may at least be sure that 'few men were better judges of what might be achieved by daring,' and that if he determined that the occasion was not ripe, he must be assumed to have known what he was about.

The House proceeded with their measure on the new footing, and on June 26th Oliver was solemnly installed as Lord Protector under the new law. Though the royal title was in abeyance, the scene marked the conversion of what had first been a military dictatorship, and then the protectorate of a republic, into a constitutional monarchy. A rich canopy was prepared at the upper end of Westminster

Hall, and under it was placed the royal Coronation Chair of Scotland which had been brought from the Abbey. On the table lay a magnificent Bible, and the sword and sceptre of the Commonwealth. When the Lord Protector had entered, the Speaker in the name of the parliament placed upon his shoulders a mantle of purple velvet lined with ermine, girt him with the sword, delivered into his hands the sceptre of massy gold, and administered the oath of fidelity to the new constitution. A prayer was offered up, and then Cromwell amid trumpet blasts and loud shouting from the people who thronged the hall, took his seat in the chair, holding the sceptre in his right hand, with the ambassador of Louis the Fourteenth on the one side, and the ambassador of the United Provinces on the other. 'What a comely and glorious sight it is,' said the Speaker, 'to behold a Lord Protector in a purple robe, with a sceptre in his hand, with the sword of justice girt about him, and his eyes fixed upon the Bible! Long may you enjoy them all to your own comfort and the comfort of the people of these nations.' Before many months were over, Oliver was declaring to them, 'I can say in the presence of God, in comparison with whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth, that I would have been glad to have lived under my woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than undertake such a government as this.'

The Protectorate has sometimes been treated as a new and original settlement of the crucial question of parliamentary sovereignty. On the contrary, the

history of the Protectorate in its two phases, under the two Instruments of 1653 and 1657 by which it was constituted, seems rather to mark a progressive return to an old system than the creation of a new one. The *Agreement of the People* (1649) was the embodiment of the idea of the absolute supremacy of a single elective House. The *Instrument of Government* (1653) went a certain way towards mitigating this supremacy, by entrusting executive power to a single person, subject to the assent and co-operation of a Council itself the creation, at first direct and afterwards indirect, of the single House. The *Humble Petition and Advice* (1657) in effect restored the principle of monarchy, and took away from parliament the right in future to choose the monarch. On him was conferred the further power of naming the members of the new Second House. The oath prescribed for a privy councillor was an oath of allegiance to the person and authority of the Lord Protector and his successors, and he was clothed with the more than regal right of deciding who the successor should be. On the other hand, the Council or cabinet by whose advice the Lord Protector was bound to govern, was to be approved by both Houses, and to be irremovable without the consent of parliament. The Protectorate then was finally established, so far as constitutional documents go and in rudimentary forms, on the same principles of parliamentary supremacy over the executive and of ministerial responsibility, that have developed our modern system of government by parliamentary cabinet.

CHAPTER VII.

DOMESTIC TRAITS.

THERE is no sign that the wonderful fortunes that had befallen him in the seventeen years since he quitted his woodside, his fields and flocks, had altered the soundness of Cromwell's nature. Large affairs had made his vision broader; power had hardened his grasp; manifold necessities of men and things had taught him lessons of reserve, compliance, suppleness, and silence; great station brought out new dignity of carriage. But the foundations were unchanged. Time never choked the springs of warm affection in him, the true refreshment of every careworn life. In his family he was as tender and as solicitous in the hour of his glory as he had been in the distant days at St. Ives and Ely. It was in the spring of 1654 that he took up his residence at Whitehall. 'His wife seemed at first unwilling to remove thither, tho' she afterwards became better satisfied with her grandeur. His mother, who by reason of her great age was not so easily flattered with these temptations, very much mistrusted the issue of affairs, and would be often afraid when she heard the noise of a musket, that her son was shot,

being exceedingly dissatisfied unless she might see him once a day at least.' Only six months after her installation in the splendours of Whitehall the aged woman passed away. 'My Lord Protector's mother,' writes Thurloe in November, 'of ninety-four years old, died the last night, and a little before her death gave my lord her blessing in these words:—"The Lord cause his face to shine upon you, and comfort ye in all your adversities, and enable you to do great things for the glory of your most high God, and to be a relief unto his people; my dear son, I leave my heart with thee; a good-night."'

His letters to his wife tell their own tale of fond importunity and affectionate response:—

'I have not leisure to write much,' he says to her from Dunbar. 'But I could chide thee that in many of thy letters thou writest to me, that I should not be unmindful of thee and thy little ones. Truly if I love you not too well, I think I err not on the other hand much. Thou art dearer to me than any creature, let that suffice.'

And then he told her, as we have seen, that he was growing an old man and felt the infirmities of age marvellously stealing upon him. He was little more than fifty, and their union had lasted thirty years. Seven months later he writes to her that he is increased in strength in his outward man:—

But that will not satisfy me, except I get a heart to love and serve my heavenly Father better. . . . Pray for me; truly I do daily for thee and the dear family, and God Almighty bless ye all with his spiritual blessings. . . . My love to the dear little ones; I pray for grace for them. I

thank them for their letters : let me have them often. . . . If Dick Cromwell and his wife be with you, my dear love to them. I pray for them ; they shall, God willing, hear from me. I love them very dearly. Truly I am not able as yet to write much. I am weary, and rest, ever thine.

He was ever, says Thurloe, a most indulgent and tender father. Richard Cromwell, as history well knows, had little share of the mastering energies that made his father 'chief of men.' With none but respectable qualities, with a taste for hawking, hunting, and horse-racing, he lacked strenuous purpose, taking life as it came, not shaping it. When the time arrived for his son's marriage, Cromwell, though plunged deep in public anxieties, did his share about the choice of a wise connection, about money, about the life of the young couple, with prudent care. Henry Cromwell, an active soldier, an administrator of conspicuous judgment and tact, and a politician with sense and acuteness, had been Commander-in-Chief in Ireland since 1655, and his father thought well enough of him in 1657, though still hardly thirty, to make him Lord-Deputy in succession to Fleetwood. Five years before, Fleetwood had married Bridget Cromwell, widow of the brave and keen-witted Ireton. Elizabeth, said to have been Oliver's favourite daughter, was married to Claypole, a Northamptonshire gentleman, of respectable family and estate. These too were staying at the Cockpit in Whitehall in 1651. 'Mind poor Betty of the Lord's great mercy,' writes Cromwell to her mother. 'Oh, I desire her not only to seek the Lord in her necessity,

but in deed and in truth to turn to the Lord; and to take heed of a departing heart, and of being cozened with worldly vanities and worldly company, which I doubt she is too subject to. I earnestly and frequently pray for her and for him. Truly they are dear to me, very dear; and I am in fear lest Satan should deceive them—knowing how weak our hearts are, and how subtle the Adversary is, and what way the deceitfulness of our hearts and the vain world make for his temptations.'

Not long after the establishment of the second Protectorate, the two youngest daughters made matches which were taken by jealous onlookers to be still further signs of the growth of Cromwell's reactionary ambition. Lady Mary, now twenty, married Lord Fauconberg, and Lady Frances in the same month married Robert Rich, grandson and heir of the Earl of Warwick. Swift tells Stella how he met Lady Fauconberg at a christening in 1710, three years before her death. He thought her extremely like her father's pictures.

The Protector delighted in music, was fond of hawking, hunting, coursing, liked a game of bowls, and took more than a sportsman's pleasure in fine horses. There is little evidence that he was other than indifferent to profane letters, but as Chancellor of the University of Oxford he encouraged the religious studies of the place, he helped the production of Walton's polyglot Bible, and he set up a college at Durham. Cromwell had compass of mind enough to realise the duty of a state to learning, but the

promotion of religion was always his commanding interest, and for learning that did not directly make towards religion, he was not likely to have much regard.

Precisians found the court at Whitehall frivolous and lax, but what they called frivolity was nothing worse than the venial sin of cheerfulness. One of the Dutch ambassadors in 1654 describes what life at court was like on occasions of state, and the picture is worth reproducing:—

> . . . The Master of the Ceremonies came to fetch us in two coaches of His Highness about half an hour past one, and brought us to Whitehall, where twelve trumpeters were ready, sounding against our coming. My lady Nieuport and my wife were brought to His Highness presently . . . who received us with great demonstration of amity. After we staid a little, we were conducted into another room, where we found a table ready covered. His Highness sat on one side of it alone; my lord B., N., and myself at the upper end, and Lord President Lawrence and others next to us. There was in the same room another table covered for other lords of the council and others. At the table of my Lady Protectrice dined my lady N., my wife, my lady Lambert, my lord Protector's daughter, and mine. The music played all the while we were at dinner. The Lord Protector [then] had us into another room, where the lady Protectrice and others came to us: where we had also music, and wine, and a psalm sung which His Highness gave us, and told us it was yet the best paper that had been exchanged between us; and from thence we were had into a gallery, next the river, where we walked with His Highness about half an hour, and then took our leaves, and were conducted back again to our houses, after the same manner as we were brought.'

Baxter tells a less genial story. Cromwell after

hearing him preach sent for him. The great divine found him with Broghill, Lambert, and Thurloe. Cromwell 'began a long and tedious speech of God's providence in the change of government, and how God had owned it, and what great things had been done at home and abroad in Spain and Holland.' Lambert fell asleep. Baxter attacked the change of government, and Cromwell with some passion defended it. 'A few days after, he sent for me again to hear my judgment about liberty of conscience, which he pretended to be most zealous for, before almost all his privy council; where, after another slow tedious speech of his, I told him a little of my judgment. And when two of his company had spun out a great deal more of the time in such-like tedious, but more ignorant speeches, some four or five hours being spent, I told him that if he would be at the labour to read it, I could tell him more of my mind in writing in two sheets, than in that way of speaking in many days.' And this in truth we may well believe. It was the age of long discourse and ecstatic exercises. John Howe, who had first attracted Cromwell by preaching for two hours and then turning the hour-glass for a third, has told us that on a Sunday or a fast-day, he began about nine in the morning, with a prayer for about quarter of an hour, in which he begged a blessing on the work of the day, and afterwards expounded a chapter for about three quarters; then prayed for an hour, preached for another hour, and prayed for half an hour: then he retired to refresh himself for quarter of an hour or

more, the people singing all the while, and then came again into the pulpit, and prayed for another hour, and gave them another sermon of about an hour's length; and then concluded towards four o'clock with a final half-hour of prayer.

Cromwell had that mark of greatness in a ruler, that he was well served. No prince had ever abler or more faithful agents, in arms, diplomacy, administration. Blake, Monk, Lockhart, Thurloe, are conspicuous names in a list that might easily be made longer of bold, diligent, and attentive men. Familiars Cromwell had none. The sage and indefatigable Thurloe, who more closely than any of the others resembled the deep-browed counsellors that stood around the throne of Elizabeth, came nearest to the heart of the Protector's deliberations. Thurloe tells us of himself that he always distrusted his own counsels, when they sprang from moments of despondency—an implication of the truth that wisdom goes with cheerfulness, of which Cromwell was most likely the inspirer. The extent and manner of his resort to advice is no small measure of the fitness of a man for large affairs. Oliver was not of the evil Napoleonic build. He was liable to bursts of passion, he had his moods, he was unwisely and fatally impatient of parliamentary discussion. But nobody knew better the value of consultation in good faith, of serious conference among men sincerely bent on common aims, of the arts of honest persuasion as distinguished from cajolery. Of that pettish egotism which regards a step taken on advice as a humiliation, he had not a

trace; he was a man. There are no signs that he ever had, what even strong men have not always been without, a taste for sycophants. Whitelocke has described how upon great businesses the Protector was wont to advise with himself, Thurloe, and a few others; how he would shut himself up with them for three or four hours together, 'would sometimes be very cheerful, and laying aside his greatness would be exceedingly familiar, and by way of diversion would make verses with them, and every one must try his fancy. He commonly called for tobacco, pipes, and a candle, and would now and then take tobacco himself; then he would fall again to his serious and great business.' This did not prevent persons around him from knowing that whatever resolutions his Highness took would be his own. Chatham, inveighing against Lord North in 1770, charged him with being without that sagacity which is the true source of information,—sagacity to compare causes and effects, to judge of the present state of things, and discern the future by a careful review of the past. 'Oliver Cromwell, who astonished mankind by his intelligence,' Chatham proceeds, 'did not derive it from spies in the cabinet of every prince in Europe; he drew it from the cabinet of his own sagacious mind.' Yet there is a passage in a letter from Thurloe to Henry Cromwell not many weeks before the end, where that faithful servant regrets his master's too ready compliance. 'His Highness finding he can have no advice from those he most expected it from, saith he will take his own resolutions, and that he cannot any

longer satisfy himself to sit still, and make himself guilty of the loss of all the honest party; and truly I have long wished that his Highness would proceed according to his own satisfaction, and not so much consider others.'

CHAPTER VIII.

FOREIGN POLICY.

We have all learned that no inconsiderable part of history is a record of the illusions of statesmen. Was Cromwell's foreign policy one of them? To the prior question what his foreign policy was, no single comprehensive answer can be given. It was mixed; defensive and aggressive, pacific and warlike; zeal for religion and zeal for trade; pride of empire, and a steadfast resistance to a restoration of the royal line by foreign action. Like every other great ruler in intricate times and in a situation without a precedent, he was compelled to change alliances, weave fresh combinations, abandon to-day the ardent conception of yesterday. His grand professed object was indeed fixed: the unity of the protestant interest in Christendom, with England in the van. Characteristically Cromwell had settled this in his mind by impulse and the indwelling light. Unluckily, in the shoals and shifting channels of international affairs, the indwelling light is but a treacherous beacon. So far as purely national aims were concerned, Cromwell's external policy was in its broad features the policy of

the Commonwealth before him.[1] What went beyond purely national aims and was in a sense his own, however imposing, was of questionable service either to the State or to the Cause.

At the outset his policy was peace. The Commonwealth had gone to war with the Dutch, and Cromwell's first use of his new power was to bring the conflict to an end (April 1654). His first boast to his parliament was that he had made treaties not only with Holland, but with Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal. These treaties were essentially commercial, but they implied general amity, which in the Dutch case did not go very deep. 'Peace,' said Oliver, using the conventional formula since worn so painfully threadbare on the eve of every war by men armed to the teeth, 'peace is desirable with all men, so far as it may be had with conscience and honour.' As time went on, designs shaped themselves in his mind that pointed not to peace but to energetic action. He went back to the maritime policy of the Long Parliament. Even in coming to terms with the Dutch in 1654, he had shown a severity that indicated both a strong consciousness of mastery, and a stiff intention to use it to the uttermost. This second policy was a trunk with two branches, a daring ideal with a double aspect, one moral, the other material. The Protector intended to create a protestant ascendancy in continental Europe, and to assert the rights and claims of English ships and English trade at sea. The union of all the protestant churches had long been a dream of more than

[1] See above, Book IV., chap. v. 348-52.

one pious zealot, but Cromwell crystallized the aspirations after spiritual communion into schemes of secular policy. In spirit it was not very unlike the Arab invaders who centuries before had swept into Europe, the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, to conquer and to convert. If he had only lived, we are told, his continental policy might have been the rudiment of something great, the foundation of a protestant and military state that might have been as powerful as the Spanish monarchy at the beginning of the century, and might have opened for England an age if not of happiness, yet of vast greatness and ascendancy (Seeley). There is no reason to think that any such sacrifice of national happiness to national ascendancy was ever a true account of Oliver or of his ideals. Those baleful policies were left for the next generation and Louis XIV., the solar orb now first diffusing its morning glow above the horizon. Justly has it been said (Gardiner), that if Oliver had been granted those twenty years more of life, that enthusiastic worshippers hold necessary for the success of his schemes, a European coalition would have been formed against the English Protector as surely as one was formed against Louis of France.

When peace was made with the Dutch (April 1654) the government found themselves with one hundred and sixty sail of 'brave and well-appointed ships swimming at sea.' The Protector and his Council held grave debate whether they should be laid up or employed in some advantageous design, and against which of the two great crowns, France or Spain, that

design should be directed; or whether they would not do better to sell their friendship to both the powers for a good sum of money down. Lambert opposed the policy of aggression in the Spanish Indies. The scene, he said, was too far off; the difficulties and the cost had not been thought out; it would not advance the protestant cause; we had far more important work at home—the reform of the law, the settlement of Ireland, and other high concernments. Whether Lambert here stood alone, or held views that were shared by colleagues on the Council, we cannot say. Cromwell argued, on the other hand, that God had brought them there to consider the work that they might do all over the world as well as at home, and if they waited for a surplus they might as well put off that work for ever. Surely the one hundred and sixty ships were a leading of Providence. The design would cost little more than laying up the ships, and there was a chance of immense profit. The proceedings of the Spaniard in working his silver mines, his shipping and trans-shipping, his startings and his stoppages, his management of trade-winds and ocean currents in bringing the annual treasure home—all these things were considered with as much care as in the old days a couple of generations before, when Drake and Hawkins and the rest carried on their mighty raids against the colonial trade of Spain, and opened the first spacious chapter in the history of the maritime power of England. From the point of view of modern public law, the picture of the Council of State with Oliver at the head of the board discussing the feasibility of

seizing the West Indies, is like so many hearty corsairs with pistols, cutlasses, and boarding caps revolving their plans in the cabin of the *Red Rover* or other pirate craft. But modern public law, such as it was, did not extend to the Spanish Main. It is true that Spain refused to grant freedom from the Inquisition and free sailing in the West Indies, and these might have been legitimate grounds of war. But it is hard to contend that they were the real or the only grounds. Historians may differ whether the expedition to the West Indies was a scheme for trade, territorial aggrandisement, and naked plunder of Spanish silver; or only a spirited protestant demonstration in force. Carnal and spiritual were strangely mingled in those times. 'We that look to Zion,' wrote a gallant anabaptist admiral of the age, 'should hold Christian communion. We have all the guns aboard.' Whether as substance of the policy or accident, plunder followed.

To disarm the Spanish king's suspicion, the Protector wrote to assure him that the despatch of the fleet to the Mediterranean implied no ill intent to any ally or friend, 'in the number of which we count your Majesty' (Aug. 5, 1654). Yet if the king could have heard the arguments at the Council of State, he might have thought that this amicable language hardly answered to the facts. Cromwell's earliest move in his new line was to despatch Blake with one strong fleet to the Mediterranean (October), and Penn and Venables (December 1654) with another to the West Indies. In each case the instructions were not less explicit against French ships than Spanish. Blake alarmed

France and Spain, menaced the Pope, and attacked the Barbary pirates. The expedition against Saint Domingo was a failure: it was ill-found, ill-conceived, and ill-led. Before returning in disgrace, the commanders, hoping to retrieve their name, acquired the prize of Jamaica. These proceedings brought the Protector directly within the sphere of the great European conflict of the age, and drew England into the heart of the new distribution of power in Europe that marked the middle epoch of the seventeenth century. From the Elizabethan times conflict on the high seas had ranked as general reprisal and did not constitute a state of war, nor did it necessarily now. The status of possessions over sea was still unfixed.[1] Cromwell, however, had no right to be surprised when Philip chose to regard aggression in the Indies as justifying declaration of war in Europe. A further inconvenient consequence was that Spain now began warmly to espouse the cause of the exiled line, and in the spring of 1656, Philip IV. formally bound himself to definite measures for the transport of a royalist force from Flanders to aid in an English restoration.

The power of Spain had begun to shrink with the abdication of Charles V. (1556). Before the middle of the seventeenth century Portugal had broken off; revolt had shaken her hold in Italy; Catalonia was in standing insurrection; the United Provinces had finally achieved their independence; by the barbarous expulsion of Moors and Jews she lost three millions of

[1] Corbett's *Spanish War*, 1585-7, viii-ix.—Navy Records Society, 1898.

the best of her industrial population; her maritime supremacy was at an end. Philip IV., the Spanish sovereign from a little time before the accession of Charles I. in England to a little time after the restoration of Charles II., was called, by flatterers, the Great. 'Like a ditch,' said Spanish humour—'the more you dig away from it, the greater the ditch.' The Treaty of Westphalia (1648), the fruit of the toil, the foresight, and the genius of Richelieu, though others gathered it, weakened the power of the Germanic branch of the House of Hapsburg, and Mazarin, the second of the two famous cardinals who for forty years governed France, was now in the crisis of his struggle with the Spanish branch. In this long struggle between two states, each torn by intestine dissension as well as by an external enemy, the power of England was recognised as a decisive factor after the rise of the republic; and before Cromwell assumed the government, Spain had hastened to recognise the new Commonwealth. Cromwell, as we have seen, long hesitated between Spain and France. Traditional policy pointed to France, for though she was predominantly catholic, yet ever since the days of Francis I., the greatest of her statesmen, including Henry IV. and Richelieu, had favoured the German princes and the protestant powers, from no special care for the reformed faith, but because the protestant powers were the adversaries of the emperor, the head of the catholic party in Europe.

Mazarin endeavoured to gain Cromwell, from the moment of his triumphant return from Worcester. It is the mark of genius to be able to satisfy new demands

as they arise, and to play new parts with skill. Expecting to deal with a rough soldier whom fortune and his sword had brought to the front, Mazarin found instead of this a diplomatist as wary, as supple, as tenacious, as dexterous, as capable of large views, as incapable of dejection, as he was all these things himself. The rude vigour of the English demands and the Lord Protector's haughty pretensions never irritated Mazarin, of whom it has been aptly said (Mignet) that his ambition raised him above self-love, and that he was so scientifically cool that even adversaries never appeared to him in the light of enemies to be hated, but only as obstacles to be moved or turned. It was at one time even conjectured, idly enough, that Mazarin designed to marry one of his nieces to the second son of Oliver. For years the match went on between the puritan chief who held the English to be the chosen people, and the Italian cardinal who declared that though his language was not French, his heart was. Mazarin's diplomacy followed the vicissitudes of Cromwell's political fortune, and the pursuit of an alliance waxed hotter or cooler, as the Protector seemed likely to consolidate his power or to let it slip. Still both of them were at bottom men of direct common sense, and their friendship stood on nearly as good a basis for six or seven years, as that which for twenty years of the next century supported the more fruitful friendship between Sir Robert Walpole and Cardinal Fleury. A French writer, eminent alike as historian and actor in State affairs, says of these negotiations that it is

the supreme art of great statesmen to treat business simply and with frankness, when they know that they have to deal with rivals who will not let themselves be either duped or frightened (Guizot). The comment is just. Cromwell was harder and less pliant, and had nothing of the caress under which an Italian often hides both sense and firmness. But each was alive to the difficulties of the other, and neither of them expected short cuts or a straight road. Mazarin had very early penetrated Cromwell's idea of making himself the guardian both of the Huguenots in France, and of the protestant interest throughout Europe. In the spring of 1655 the massacre of the protestants in the Piedmontese valleys stirred a wave of passion in England that still vibrates in Milton's sonnet, and that by Cromwell's impressive energy was felt in Europe. At no other time in his history did the flame in his own breast burn with an intenser glow. The incident both roused his deepest feelings and was a practical occasion for realising his policy of a confederation of protestant powers, with England at the head of them and France acting in concert. To be indifferent to such doings, he said, is a great sin, and a deeper sin still is it to be blind to them from policy or ambition. He associated his own personality with the case, in a tone of almost jealous directness that struck a new note. No English ruler has ever shown a nobler figure than Cromwell in the case of the Vaudois, and he had all the highest impulses of the nation with him. He said to the French ambassador that the woes of the poor Piedmontese went as close

to his heart as if they were his own nearest kin; and he gave personal proof of the sincerity of his concern by a munificent contribution to the fund for the relief of the martyred population. Never was the great conception of a powerful state having duties along with interests more magnanimously realised. It was his diplomatic pressure upon France that secured redress, though Mazarin, not without craft, kept for himself a foremost place.

Now was the time when the Council of State directed their secretary to buy a new atlas for their use, and to keep the globe always standing in the council chamber. The Venetian representative in London in 1655 declares that the court of the Protector was the most brilliant and most regarded in all Europe: six kings had sent ambassadors and solicited his friendship. The glory of all this in the eyes of Cromwell, like its interest in history, is the height that was thus reached among the ruling and established forces of Europe by protestantism. The influence of France, says Ranke, had rescued protestantism from destruction; it was through Cromwell that protestantism took up an independent position among the powers of the world. A position so dazzling was a marvellous achievement of force and purpose, if only the foundation had been sounder and held better promise of duration.

The war with Spain in which England was now involved by her aggression in the West Indies, roused little enthusiasm in the nation. The parliament did not disapprove the war, but showed no readiness to

vote the money. The Spanish trade in wine, oil, sugar, fruit, cochineal, silver, was more important to English commerce than the trade with France. It is worthy of remark that the Long Parliament had directed its resentment and ambition against the Dutch, and displayed no ill-will to Spain; and much the same is true of the Little Parliament and even of Cromwell himself in early stages. The association of France in the mind of England with Mary Stuart, with the queen of Charles I., and with distant centuries of bygone war, was some set-off to the odium that surrounded the Holy Office, the sombre engine of religious cruelty in the Peninsula; and the Spanish Armada was balanced in popular imagination by the Bartholomew Massacre in France, of which Burleigh said that it was the most horrible crime since the Crucifixion. No question of public opinion and no difficulties at the exchequer prevented the vigorous prosecution of the war. Blake, though himself a republican, served the Protector with the same patriotic energy and resource that he had given to the Commonwealth until, after the most renowned of all his victories, and worn out by years of service, the hero died on reaching Plymouth Sound (1657).

By October of 1655 Mazarin had brought Cromwell so far as to sign the treaty of Westminster, but the treaty did not go to the length of alliance. The two powers agreed to keep the peace among the mariners of their respective countries, who had in fact for years been in a state of informal war; to suppress obnoxious port dues and duties of customs; and otherwise to

introduce better order into their maritime affairs. By a secret article, political exiles were to be sent out of both the contracting countries. The treaty relieved Mazarin of his anxieties on the side of England, and brought him a step nearer to his great object of imposing peace upon Spain.

It was not until March 23, 1657, that the next step was taken, and the treaty of Paris concluded. This marked again a new phase of the Protector's policy, for he now at last directly bound himself to active participation in the play of European politics, and he acquired a continental stronghold. The preamble of the new treaty states with sonorous and edifying decorum that the intention of the very Christian King and the Lord Protector, moved by their singular love of public tranquillity, is to compel the common enemy to allow the Christian world at length to enjoy peace. England is to send 6000 men for the siege of Gravelines, Mardyke, and Dunkirk, as well as a fleet to support them on the coast. When these strong places have been recovered from the Spanish, the two last-named are to be handed over to the Protector. Mazarin described the English alliance as the best day's work of his life, and begged his assailants at the Vatican and in Paris to remember that the Protector had his free choice between France and the cession of Dunkirk on the one hand, and Spain and the cession of Calais on the other, and that only the new treaty had averted the choice that would have been the wrong choice for France.

The English force was duly despatched. The young

French king with lively curiosity reviewed the iron men by whom his kinsman had been vanquished, dethroned, and put to death. Turenne, the famous marshal, a protestant with the blood of the House of Orange in his veins, but destined to a strange conversion and to be the instrument of one of the great public crimes of the century, pronounced the Cromwellian contingent to be the finest troops in the world. After some delay Mardyke was taken, and then formally handed over to the English representative (October 1657). It was the first foothold gained by England on continental soil since the loss of Calais in the time of Queen Mary a hundred years before. Dunkirk was left until the next season. The glory then won by English arms belongs to a further page.

At the end of 1655, Cromwell told the agent from the Great Elector that it was not only to rule over the English Republic that he had received a call from God, but to introduce union and friendship among the princes of Europe. Cool observers from Venice, who knew thoroughly the ground that the Protector knew so little, predicted in 1655 that his vast and ill-conceived designs must end in spreading confusion all over Christendom. These designs made little progress. The Great Elector remonstrated. He warned Cromwell's ambassador that in the present state of Europe the interest of protestantism itself required them to follow safe rather than specious counsels, and to be content with trying to secure freedom of conscience by treaty. Instead of a grand protestant league against the German branch of the House of

Austria, what Oliver saw with perplexity and anger was violent territorial conflict among the Baltic protestant powers themselves. The Swedish king, the Danish king, the Great Elector, were all in hot quarrel with one another—the quarrel in which Charles X., grandson of Gustavus Adolphus, and grandfather of Charles XII., astounded Europe by marching twenty thousand men across some thirteen miles of frozen sea on the path of territorial conquest. The dream of Charles, from whom Cromwell hoped so much, was not religious, but the foundation of a new Gothic Empire. Even anabaptists were not more disappointing at home than were the northern powers abroad. Even the protestant cantons of Switzerland did not help him to avenge the barbarities in Piedmont. When a new Emperor came to be chosen, only three of the electors were protestant, and one of the protestant three actually voted for the Austrian Leopold. The presence of Cromwell's troops in Flanders naturally filled the Dutch with uneasiness, and inclined one protestant republic again to take arms against another. Finally, to hasten the decline of Spain was directly to prepare for the ascendancy of France; of a country, that is to say, where all the predominant influences were catholic, and would inevitably revive in unrestrained force as soon as the monarchy was once secure. Bolingbroke mentions a tradition of which he had heard from persons who lived in those days, and whom he supposes to have got it from Thurloe, that Cromwell was in treaty with Spain and ready to turn his arms against France at the moment when he

died. So soon, it is inferred, did he perceive the harm that would be done to the general interest of Europe by that French preponderance which his diplomacy had made possible and his arms had furthered. But, they say, to do great things a man must act as though he would never die, and if Cromwell had only lived, Louis XIV. would never have dared to revoke the Edict of Nantes. This is problematical indeed. If the view ascribed to Cromwell by some modern admirers was really his, it must rank among the contradictory chimeras that not seldom haunt great minds. Suppose that Cromwell's scheme of protestant ascendancy in Europe had been less hard to reconcile with actual conditions than it was, how was he to execute it? How was the conversion of England into a crusading military state, and the vast increase of taxation necessary to support such a state, calculated to give either popularity or strength to a government so precarious and so unstable, that after five years of experiment upon experiment it could exist neither with a parliament nor without one? It was the cost of the war with Spain that prevented Oliver from being able to help the protestant against the catholic cantons in Switzerland, zealous as were his sympathies. And one ground of his anxiety to possess Dunkirk was trade antagonism to the Dutch, who were at least as good protestants as the English. Oliver's ideal was not without a grandeur of its own, but it was incongruous in its parts, and prolonged trial of it could only have made its unworkableness more manifest.

'You have accounted yourselves happy,' said the Protector in his speech in January 1658, 'in being environed by a great ditch from all the world beside. Truly you will not be able to keep your ditch nor your shipping, unless you turn your ships and shipping into troops of horse and companies of foot, and fight to defend yourselves on terra firma.' The great Elizabeth, like Lambert at Cromwell's own council-table, believed in the policy of the ditch and 'the felicity of full coffers,' and she left a contented people and a settled realm. Cromwell, notwithstanding all the glory of his imperial vision of England as a fighting continental state, was in fact doing his best to prevent either content or the settlement of his own rule in the island whence alone all this splendour must first radiate.

To turn to another branch of external policy. The future growth of vast West Indian interests, of which the seizure of Jamaica was the initial step, has made it possible to depict Cromwell as the conscious author of a broad system of colonial expansion. What is undoubtedly true is that such ideas were then alive. Nor had the famous traditions of the Elizabethans ever died. The Commonwealth from the time of its birth, while Cromwell was still engaged in the reduction of Scotland, had shown the same vigour in the case of insurgent colonies, as against royalist foes in waters nearer home, or against the forces of distraction in the two outlying kingdoms. The Navigation Act, which belongs to the same date, has been truly described as designed among other nearer objects to

strengthen the hold of England on her distant possessions, though it is perhaps a reading of modern phrases into old events, to say that the statesmen of the republic deliberately designed to show that England was to be not merely a European power, but the centre of a world-wide empire. Be this as it may, Cromwell's colonial policy was that of his predecessors, as it was that of the statesmen who followed him. He watched the colonies in a rational and conciliatory spirit, and attended with energy to the settlement of Jamaica, though some of his expedients were too hurried to be wise. With the energetic temperament we have to take its drawbacks. For his lifetime little came of his zealous hopes for the West Indies, and English merchants thought bitterly on their heavy losses in the Spanish trade for which a barren acquisition seemed a sorry recompense. Colonial expansion came, and it came in spite of the misgivings of interested traders or the passing miscalculations of statesmen. It had its spring in the abiding demands of national circumstance; in the continuous action of economic necessities upon a national character of incomparable energy and adventure. Such a policy was not, and could not be, the idea of one man, or the mark of a single generation.

CHAPTER IX.

GROWING EMBARRASSMENTS.

In France, a century and a quarter after Cromwell's day, they said that every clerk who had read Rousseau's *New Heloïsa*, every schoolmaster who had translated ten pages of Livy, every journalist who knew by heart the sophisms of the *Social Contract*, was sure that he had found the philosopher's stone and was instantly ready to frame a constitution. Our brave fathers of the Cromwellian times were almost as rash. There is no branch of political industry that men approach with hearts so light, and yet that leaves them at the end so dubious and melancholy, as the concoction of a Second Chamber. Cromwell and his parliament set foot on this *pons asinorum* of democracy, without a suspicion of its dangers.

The Protector made it a condition at his conferences in the spring of 1657, that if he was to go on there must be other persons interposed between him and the House of Commons. To prevent tumultuary and popular spirits he sought a screen. It was granted that he should name another House. Nothing seemed simpler or more plausible, and yet he was

steering straight upon reefs and shoals. A mistake here, said Thurloe, will be like war or marriage: it admits of no repentance. If the old House of Lords had been alive, and had also by miracle been sincerely in the humour to work for national pacification, to restore it might have tended to union. As it was, to call out of empty space an artificial House, without the hold upon men's minds of history and ancient association, without defined powers, without marked distinction of persons or interests, and then to try to make it an effective screen against an elected House to whose assent it owed its own being, was not to promote union but directly to provoke division and to intensify it. Confident in his own good faith, and with a conviction that to frame laws in view of contingent possibilities has a tincture of impiety in it as a distrust of Providence, Cromwell never thought out the scheme; he left it in the *Humble Petition and Advice* with leaks, chinks, and wide apertures that might horrify the newest apprentice of a parliamentary draftsman. The natural result followed. The new House was not to be more than seventy in number nor less than forty, to be named by the Protector and approved by the House of Commons; a place in it was not hereditary; and it received no more impressive title than the Other House. Cromwell selected a very respectable body of some sixty men, beginning with his two sons, Richard and Henry, and including good lawyers, judges, generals, and less than a dozen of the old nobles. Some of the ablest, like Lockhart and Monk and Henry Cromwell, were absent from

England, and all of the old nobles save five held aloof. Like smaller reformers since, Cromwell had never decided, to begin with, whether to make his Lords strong or weak: strong enough to curb the Commons, and yet weak enough for the Commons to curb them. The riddle seems unanswered to this day. He forgot too that by removing so many men of experience and capacity from the Commons, he was impairing the strength of his own government at the central point of attack. Attack was certain, for on the opening of the second session of his second parliament (Jan. 20, 1658) the ninety members whom he had shut out from the first session were to be admitted. Some of them after much consideration deemed it their duty 'to leave that tyrant and his packed convention to stand upon his sandy foundation,' but the majority seem to have thought otherwise and they reappeared.

The looseness of the constituting document made the business of an opposition easy, if it were inclined to action. One clause undoubtedly enacted that no standing law could be altered, and no new law made, except by Act of Parliament. As a previous clause had defined a parliament to consist of two Houses, this seemed to confer on the Other House a co-ordinate share in legislation. On the other hand, the only section dealing with the specific attributes of the new House regards it as a court of civil and criminal appeal, and the opposition argued that the Other House was to be that and nothing else. It was here, and on the question of government by a single

House, that the ground of party battle was chosen. Cromwell's enemies had a slight majority. After the debate had gone on for four days, he addressed them in an urgent remonstrance. He dwelt on the alarming state of Europe, the combinations against the protestant interest, the discord within that interest itself, the danger of a Spanish invasion to restore the Stuarts, the deadly perils of disunion at home.

The House was deaf. For ten days more the stubborn debate on the name and place of the Other House went on. Stealthy attempts were made to pervert the army in the interest of a republican revival. As in the old times of the Long Parliament, the opposition worked up petitions in the city. These petitions were designed by the malcontents to serve as texts for motions and debates in favour of returning to a pure commonwealth. On the other wing there were some in the parliament who even held commissions from the king. The Protector, well aware of all that was on foot, at last could endure it no more. In opening the session he had referred to his infirmity of health, and the labour of wrestling with the difficulties of his place, as Maidstone says, 'drank up his spirits, of which his natural constitution yielded a vast stock.' Royalists consoled themselves with stories that he was not well in mind or body; that his mutinous officers vexed him strangely; and that he was forced to take opium to make him sleep. The story of the circumstances of the last dealings of Oliver with a parliament was related as follows:—A mysterious porter brought letters addressed to the Protector:

Thurloe directed Maidstone, the steward, to take them to his Highness. The door of the apartment was closed, but on his knocking very hard, Cromwell cried out angrily to know who was there. Presently he unbarred the door, took the letters, and shut himself in again. By and by he sent for Whalley and Desborough, who were to be in command of the guard that night. He asked them if they had heard no news, and on their saying no, he again asked if they had not heard of a petition. He bade them go to Westminster. On their way they heard some of the soldiers using disaffected words. This they immediately reported, and Oliver told them to change the ordering of the guards for the night. The next morning (Feb. 4), before nine o'clock he called for his breakfast, telling Thurloe, who chanced to be ill, that he would go to the House, at which Thurloe wondered why his Highness resolved so suddenly. He did not tell him why, but he was resolved to go. 'And when he had his meal, he withdrew himself, and went the back way, intending alone to have gone by water; but the ice was so as he could not; then he came the foot way, and the first man of the guard he saw he commanded him to press the nearest coach, which he did, with but two horses in it, and so he went with not above four footmen, and about five or six of the guards to the House; after which, retiring into the withdrawing room, drank a cup of ale and ate a piece of toast. Then the lord Fiennes, near to him, asked his Highness what he intended; he said he would dissolve the House. Upon which the lord Fleetwood

said, I beseech your Highness consider first well of it; it is of great consequence. He replied, You are a milksop: by the living God I will dissolve the House. (Some say he iterated this twice, and some say it was, As the Lord liveth.)'

His speech was for once short and concentrated, and he did not dissemble his anger. 'What is like to come upon this,' he concluded, 'the enemy being ready to invade us, but our present blood and confusion? And if this be so, I do assign it to this cause: your not assenting to what you did invite me to by your Petition and Advice, as that which might prove the settlement of the nation. And if this be the end of your sitting, and this be your carriage, I think it high time that an end be put to your sitting. And I so dissolve this parliament. And let God be judge between you and me.' To which end, says one report, many of the Commons cried Amen.

Cromwell's government had gone through six stages in the five years since the revolution of 1653. The first was a dictatorship tempered by a military council. Second, while wielding executive power as Lord-General, he called a parliamentary convention. Third, the convention vanished, and the soldiers installed him as Protector under the Instrument. Fourth, the system under the Instrument broke down, and for months the Protectorate again meant the personal rule of the head of the army. Fifth, the rule of the major-generals broke down, and was followed by a kind of constitutional monarchy. Sixth, the monarch and the parliament quarrelled, and the constitution broke down.

This succession of expedients and experiments may have been inevitable in view of the fundamental dislocation of things after rebellion and war. It is true that religious visionaries, hot-headed political theorists, the rivalries of men and factions, the clash of solid underlying interests, all worked to break down the fabric as fast as it was reared. Against these ceaseless dissolvents Cromwell heroically persisted, and he kept general order. Still, in face of such a spectacle and such results, it is hardly possible to claim for the triumphant soldier a high place in the history of original and creative statesmanship.

The Protector next flung himself into the work of tracking out the conspirators. That the design of a Spanish invasion to fit in with domestic insurrection would hopelessly miscarry, may have been probable. That the fidelity of the army could be relied upon, he hardly can have doubted. But a ruler bearing all the responsibilities of a cause and a nation, cannot afford to trust to the chapter of accidents. We who live nearly three centuries off cannot pretend to measure the extent of the danger, but nobody can read the depositions of witnesses in the cases of the spring of 1658, without feeling the presence of mischief that even the most merciful of magistrates was bound to treat as grave. The nation showed no resentment against treasonable designs; it was not an ordered and accepted government against which they were directed. This did not lighten the necessity of striking hard at what Henry Cromwell called these recurring anniversary mischiefs. Examples were made in the persons of Sir Henry

Slingsby, Dr. Hewitt, and some obscurer persons. Hewitt was an episcopal clergyman, an acceptable preacher to those of his own way of thinking, a fervent royalist: the evidence is strong that he was deep in Stuart plots. Slingsby's case is less clear. That he was a royalist and a plotter is certain, but the evidence suggests that there was some ugly truth in what he said on his trial that he was 'trepanned' by agents of the government who, while he was in their custody at Hull, extracted his secrets from him by pretending to favour his aims. The High Courts of Justice before which these and other prisoners of the same stamp were arraigned, did not please steady lawyers like Whitelocke, but the Protector thought them better fitted to terrify evil-doers than an ordinary trial at common law. Though open to all the objections against special criminal tribunals, the High Courts of Justice during Cromwell's reign were conducted with temper and fairness: they always had good lawyers among them, and the size of the court, never composed of less than thirty members, gave it something of the quality of trial by jury. It is said that Hewitt had privately performed the service according to the Anglican rite at the recent marriage of Mary Cromwell with Lord Fauconberg, and that the bride interceded for his life, but the Protector was immovable, and both Slingsby and Hewitt were sent to the scaffold (June 1658). Plots were once more for a season driven underground. But it is impossible that the grim circumstances of their suppression could have helped the popularity of the government.

Meanwhile the Protectorate was sinking deeper and deeper into the bog of financial difficulty. 'We are so out at the heels here,' Thurloe says in April, 'that I know not what we shall do for money.' At the end of the month, he reports that the clamour for money both from the sea and land is such that they can scarce be borne. Henry Cromwell, Lord-Deputy in Ireland since November, is in the last extremity. Hunger, he says, will break through stone walls, and if they are kept so bare, they will soon have to cease all industry and sink to the brutish practices of the Irish themselves. Fleetwood is sure they spend as little public money except for public needs as any government ever did; but their expenses, he admits, were extraordinary and could not with safety be retrenched. In June things are still declared to be at a standstill. The sums required could not possibly be supplied without a parliament, and in that direction endless perils lurked. Truly, I think, says Thurloe, in words that deserve attention, 'that nothing but some unexpected Providence can remove the present difficulties, which the Lord it may be will afford us, if He hath thoughts of peace towards us.' By July things are even worse, 'our necessities much increasing every day.'

Cromwell threw the deliberations on the subject of a parliament on to a junto of nine. What was the parliament to do when it should meet? How was the government to secure itself against cavaliers on one hand, and commonwealth ultras on the other? For the cavaliers some of the junto suggested an oath of abjuration and a fine of half their estates. This was

not very promising. The cavaliers might take the oath, and yet not keep it. To punish cavaliers who were innocent, for the sins of the plotters, would be recognised as flagrantly unjust; and as many of the old cavaliers were now dead, it was clearly impolitic by such injustice to turn their sons into irreconcilables. The only thing in the whole list of constitutional difficulties on which the junto could agree, was that the Protector should name his successor. If this close council could only come to such meagre conclusion upon the vexed questions inseparable from that revision which, as everybody knew, must be faced, what gain could be expected from throwing the same questions on the floor of a vehemently distracted parliament? There is reason even for supposing that in his straits Oliver sounded some of the republicans, including men of such hard grit as Ludlow and Vane. Henry Cromwell was doubtful and suspicious of any such combination, and laid down the wholesome principle in party concerns, 'that one that runs along with you may more easily trip up the heels, than he that wrestles with you.' We go wrong in political judgment if we leave out rivalries, heart-burnings, personalities, even among leading men and great men. History is apt to smooth out these rugosities; hero-worship may smooth them out; time hides them; but they do their work. Less trace of personal jealousy or cabal is to be found in the English rebellion than in almost any other revolutionary movement in history, and Cromwell himself was free from these disfigurements of public life. Of Lambert, fine soldier and

capable man as he was, we cannot affirm so much, and he had confederates. Henry Cromwell's clear sight never failed him, and he perceived that the discussion was idle. 'Have you, after all,' he asks of Thurloe, 'got any settlement for men to swear to? Does not your peace depend upon his Highness' life, and upon his peculiar skill and faculty and personal interest in the army as now modelled and commanded? I say, beneath the immediate hand of God, if I know anything of the affairs in England, there is no other reason why we are not in blood at this day.' In other words, no settlement was even now in sight, and none was possible if Cromwell's mighty personality should be withdrawn. This judgment from such a man is worth a whole chapter of our modern dissertation. It was the whole truth, to none known better than to the Lord Protector himself.

CHAPTER X.

THE CLOSE.

One parting beam of splendour broke through the clouded skies. The Protector, in conformity with the revised treaty made with France in March (1658), had despatched six thousand foot, as well as a naval contingent, to be auxiliaries to the French in an attack by land and sea upon Dunkirk. The famous Turenne was in general command of the allied forces, with Lockhart under his orders at the head of the English six thousand. Dramatic elements were not wanting. Cardinal Mazarin was on the field, and Louis the Fourteenth, then a youth of twenty, was learning one of his early lessons in the art of war. In the motley Spanish forces confronting the French king, were his cousins the Duke of York and the Duke of Gloucester, the two sons of Charles the First, and, like Louis himself, grandsons of Henry of Navarre. Along with the English princes were the brigades of Irish and royalist English who had followed the fortunes of the exiled line, and who now once more faced the ever-victorious Ironsides.

Cromwell sent Fauconberg, his new son-in-law, to Calais with letters of salutation and compliment to the French king and his minister, accompanied by a present of superb English horses. The emissary was received with extraordinary courtesies alike by the monarch and the cardinal, and the latter even conducted him by the hand to the outer door, a compliment that he had never before been known to pay to the ambassador of any crowned head.

The battle of the Dunes (June 14) was fought among the sandhills of Dunkirk, and ended in the destruction of the Spanish army. 'The English,' says a French eyewitness, 'pike in hand, charged with such stubborn vigour the eight Spanish battalions posted on the high ground of the downs, that in face of musketry fire and stout resistance the English drove them headlong from their position.' These were the old or natural Spaniards as distinguished from Walloon and German, and were the flower of the Spanish army. Their position was so strong that Lockhart at first thought it desperate; and when all was over, he called it the hottest dispute that he had ever seen. The two Stuart princes are said to have forgotten their wrongs at the hand of the soldier who had trained that invincible band, and to have felt a thrill of honourable pride at the gallantry of their countrymen. Turenne's victory was complete, and in a week Dunkirk surrendered. Then came a bitter moment for the French. The king received Dunkirk from the Spaniards, only to hand over the keys

according to treaty to the English, and Lockhart at once took possession in the name of the Lord Protector. Mazarin knew the price he was paying to be tremendous. The French historians[1] think that he foresaw that English quarrels would one day be sure to enable France to recover it by sword or purse, and so in time they did. Meanwhile the Ironsides gave the sage and valiant Lockhart trouble by their curiosity about the unhallowed churches of the Scarlet Lady. They insisted on keeping their heads covered; some saw in the sacred treasures good material for loot; and one of them nearly caused a violent affray by lighting his pipe at a candle on the altar where a priest was saying mass. But Lockhart was strict, and discipline prevailed. Hardly less embarrassing than want of reverence in the soldiery were the long discourses with which Hugh Peters, the Boanerges of the military pulpit, would fain have regaled his singular ally, the omnipotent cardinal. Louis XIV. despatched a mission of much magnificence bearing to Cromwell a present of a sword of honour with a hilt adorned with precious gems. In after days, when Louis had become arch-persecutor and the shining champion of divine right, the pride of the Most Christian King was mortified by recollecting the profuse compliments that he had once paid to the impious regicide.

The glory of their ruler's commanding place in Europe gratified English pride, but it brought no

[1] Bourelly, *Cromwell et Mazarin*, p. 261. Chéruel, *Hist. de France sous Mazarin*, iii. 292-5.

composure into the confused and jarring scene. It rather gave new nourishment to the root of evil. 'The Lord is pleased to do wonderfully for his Highness,' said Thurloe after Dunkirk, 'and to bless him in his affairs beyond expression,' but he speedily reverts to the grinding necessity of putting affairs on some better footing. Men with cool heads perceived that though continental acquisitions might strengthen our security in one way, yet by their vast cost they must add heavily to the financial burdens that constituted the central weakness of the protectorate, and prevented the real settlement of a governing system. For the Protector himself the civil difficulties against which he had for seven years with such manful faith and heroic persistency contended, were now soon to come to an end. He told his last parliament that he looked upon himself as one set on a watch-tower to see what may be for the good of these nations, and what may be for the preventing of evil. The hour of the dauntless sentinel's relief soon sounded. Death had already this year stricken his household more than one sore blow. Rich, who had married Frances Cromwell in November, died in February. Elizabeth Claypole lost her youngest son in June. All through the summer Elizabeth herself was torn by a cruel malady, and in August she died at Hampton Court. For many days her father, insensible even to the cares of public business, watched with ceaseless devotion by the bedside of the dearest of his children. He was himself ill with gout and other distempers, and his disorders were aggravated by close vigils and the

depth of his affliction. A low fever seized him, presently turning to a dangerous ague. He met his Council from time to time and attended to affairs as long as he was able. It was in these days (Aug. 20, 1658) that George Fox met him riding into Hampton Court, 'and before I came to him,' says the mystic, 'as he rode at the head of his lifeguard I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him.' A little later he was taken to London, and while St. James's was being made ready, he stayed at Whitehall. He quitted it no more. 'He had great discoveries of the Lord to him in his sickness, and had some assurances of his being restored and made further serviceable in this work. Never was there a greater stock of prayers going for any man than there is now going for him, and truly there is a general consternation upon the spirits of all men, good and bad, fearing what may be the event of it, should it please God to take his Highness at this time. Men's hearts seemed as sunk within them.' When the great warrior knew that the end was sure, he met it with the confident resignation of his faith. He had seen death too often and too near to dread the parting hour of mortal anguish. Chaplains, preachers, godly persons, attended in an adjoining room, and came in and out as the heavy hours went on, to read the Bible to him or to pray with him. To one of these he put the moving question, so deep with penitential meaning, so pathetic in its humility and misgiving, in its wistful recall of the bright bygone dawn of life in the soul:—'*Tell me, is it possible to fall from grace?*' '*No, it is not*

possible,' said the minister. '*Then*,' said the dying Cromwell, '*I am safe, for I know that I was once in grace.*'

With weighty repetitions and great vehemency of spirit he quoted the texts that have awed or consoled so many generations of believing men. In broken murmurs of prayer, he besought the favour of heaven for the people; that they might have consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love; that they and the work of reformation might be delivered. 'Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. Pardon such as desire to trample on the dust of a poor worm, for they are thy people too.' All the night of the 2nd of September he was very restless, and 'there being something to drink offered him, he was desired to take the same and to endeavour to sleep; unto which he answered, "*It is not my design to drink or to sleep, but my design is to make what haste I can to be gone.*"' On Monday, the 30th of August, a wild storm had raged over land and sea, and while Cromwell was slowly sinking, the days broke upon houses shattered, mighty trees torn up by the roots, foundered ships, and drowning men. Friday, the 3rd of September, was the anniversary of two of his most famous victories. It was just eight years since with radiant eye he had watched the sun shine forth over the glistening waters at Dunbar, and seen the scattering of the enemies of the Lord. Now he lay in the

stupor of helpless death, and about four o'clock in the afternoon his days came to their end.

His remains were privately interred in Henry the Seventh's chapel three weeks later, and for a couple of months a waxen effigy in robes of state with crown and sceptre was exhibited at Somerset House. Then (Nov. 23) the public funeral took place with profuse and regal pomp, and amid the princes, lawgivers, and warriors who have brought renown and power to the name of England, the dust of Cromwell lay for a season in the great time-hallowed Minster.

In little more than two years the hour of vengeance struck, and a base and impious revenge it proved. A unanimous resolution of the House of Commons directed the savage ceremonial, and the date was the anniversary (January 30, 1661) of the execution of King Charles twelve years before. 'It was kept as a very solemn day of fasting and prayer. This morning the carcases of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw (which the day before had been brought from the Red Lion Inn, Holborn) were drawn upon a sledge to Tyburn [a stone's throw from where the Marble Arch now stands], and then taken out of their coffins, and in their shrouds hanged by the neck until the going down of the sun. They were then cut down, their heads taken off, and their bodies buried in a grave under the gallows. The coffin in which was the body of Cromwell was a very rich thing, very full of gilded hinges and nails.' The three heads were fixed upon poles, and set up at the southern end of Westminster

Hall, where Pepys saw them four days after on the spot at which the regicides had judged the king.[1]

To imply that Cromwell stands in the line of European dictators with Charles V. or Louis XIV. or Napoleon is a hyperbole that does him both less than justice and more. Guizot brings us nearer to the truth when he counts Cromwell, William III., and Washington as chiefs and representatives of sovereign crises that have settled the destinies of nations. When we go on to ask what precisely was Cromwell's share in a mission so supreme, the answer, if we seek it away from the prepossessions of modern controversy, is not hard to discern. It was by his military genius, by the might of the legions that he created and controlled and led to victory upon victory; it was at Marston and Naseby, at Preston and Worcester, in Ireland and at Dunbar, that Cromwell set his deep mark on the destinies of England as she was, and of that vaster dominion into which the English realm was in the course of ages to be transformed. He was chief of a party who shared his own strong perception that neither civil freedom nor political could be made secure without the sword, and happily the swordsman showed himself consummate. In speed and vigour, in dash and in prudence, in force of shock and quick steadiness of recovery; in sieges,

[1] So I read Pepys. In any case, however, evidence points to the fact that the heads were ultimately fixed on the roof outside.

marches, long wasting campaigns, pitched engagements; as commander of horse, as tactician, and as strategist, the modern expert ranks Cromwell among the foremost masters of the rough art of war in every branch. Above all, he created the instrument which in discipline, skill, and those highest military virtues that come of moral virtues, has never been surpassed.

In our own half-century now closing, alike in Western Europe and across the Atlantic, the torch of war has been lighted rather for Unity of race or state, than for Liberty. Cromwell struck for both. It was his armed right hand that crushed the absolutist pretensions alike of crown and mitre, and then forced the three kingdoms into the mould of a single state. It was at those decisive moments when the trembling balance hung on fortune in the battlefield, that the unconquerable captain turned the scale. After we have discussed all the minor aspects of his special policies on this occasion or the other, after we have scanned all the secondary features of his rule, this is still what in a single sentence defines the true place of Cromwell in our history.

Along with that paramount claim, he performed the service of keeping a provisional form of peace, and delivering the nation from the anarchy in which both order and freedom would have been submerged. He made what some of the best of his contemporaries thought dire mistakes; he forsook many principles in his choice of means, which he intended to preserve in working out the end; and many of his difficulties were of his own creation. Yet watchfulness, self-effacement,

versatility, and resource, for the time and on the surface repaired all, and as 'constable of the parish' his persistency was unfaltering and unmatched. In the harder task of laying the foundations of a deeper order that might be expected to stand after his own imperious control should be withdrawn, he was beaten. He hardly counted on more. In words already quoted, 'I did out of necessity,' he said, 'undertake that business, not so much out of a hope of doing any good, as out of a desire to prevent mischief and evil.' He reared no dam nor bulwark strong enough to coerce either the floods of revolutionary faction, or the reactionary tides that came after. 'Does not your peace,' as Henry Cromwell asked, 'depend upon his Highness's life, and upon his peculiar skill and faculty and personal interest in the army?' That is to say, the Protectorate was no system, but only the transitory expedient of individual supremacy.

Richard Cromwell, it is true, acceded without opposition. For a few months the new Protector bore the outward ensigns of supreme power, but the reality of it was not his for a day. The exchequer was so dilapidated, that he underwent the humiliation of begging Mazarin to lend him fifty thousand pounds. The Council of War sought an early opportunity of setting up their claim to military predominance. The majority in the new parliament was undoubtedly favourable at first to Richard and his government, but a constitution depending for its life on the fluctuations of majority and minority in incessant divisions in the lobbies of a House of Commons, was evidently not

worth a month's purchase. Authority in the present was sapped and dislodged by arraigning it in the past. Financial deficit and abuses in administration were exposed to rigorous assault. Prisoners of state, committed on no more lawful warrant than the Protector's will, were brought up to the bar from the Tower and strong places elsewhere, attended by applauding crowds, and were received with marks of sympathy for the victim and resentment against the dead oppressor. Dunkirk, Jamaica, the glories of Blake, the humiliation of Spain, went for nothing against the losses of trade. The struggle between parliament and army, so long quelled by the iron hand of Oliver, but which he was never able to bring to enduring adjustment, broke into flame. Richard Cromwell, a man of honour and sense, but without the prestige of a soldier, succumbed and disappeared (May 1659). The old quarrel between military power and civil fought itself to an end, in one of those squalid scenes of intrigue, egotism, mutual reproach, political impotency, in which so many revolutions since have expired. Happily no blood was shed. Then the ancient line was recalled,—the cavaliers infuriated by old defeat and present ruin, the bishops eager to clamber into their thrones again, the bulk of the nation on the same side. At the new king's right hand was Clarendon; but fourteen years of exile, with all its privations, contumelies, and heart-sickness of hope perpetually deferred, had soured him and blotted out from his mind the principles and aspirations of the old days when he had stood by the side of Pym and Hampden against Laud, Strafford, and Charles. The

monarchy no doubt came back with its claims abated. So much the sword of Oliver had made safe. But how little had been permanently done for that other cause more precious in Oliver's sight than everything besides, was soon shown by the Act of Uniformity, the Test Act, the Conventicle Act, the Five Mile Act, and all the rest of the apparatus of church privilege and proscription.

It is hard to resist the view that Cromwell's revolution was the end of the mediæval, rather than the beginning of the modern era. He certainly had little of the faith in progress that became the inspiration of a later age. His respect for Public Opinion—supposed to be the driving force of modern government—was a strictly limited regard. In one sense he was no democrat, for he declared, as we have seen, that the question is not what pleases people, but what is for their good. This came rather near to Charles's words as he stood upon the scaffold, that the people's liberty lay in the laws, 'not their having a share in government; that is nothing pertaining to them.' But then, on the other hand, Cromwell was equally strong that things obtained by force, though never so good in themselves, are both less to the ruler's honour and less likely to last. 'What we gain in a free way, it is better than twice as much in a forced, and will be more truly ours and our posterity's' (*ante*, p. 242); and the safest test of any constitution is its acceptance by the people. And again, 'It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon a supposition he may abuse it.' The root of all external freedom is here.

In saying that Cromwell had the spirit, insight, and grasp that fit a man to wield power in high affairs, we only repeat that he had the instinct of government, and this is a very different thing from either a taste for abstract ideas of politics, or the passion for liberty. The instinct of order has been as often the gift of a tyrant as of a hero, as common to some of the worst hearts in human history as to some of the best. Cromwell was no Frederick the Great, who spoke of mankind as *diese verdammte Rasse*, that accursed tribe. He belonged to the rarer and nobler type of governing men, who see the golden side, who count faith, pity, hope among the counsels of practical wisdom, and who for political power seek a moral base. This is a key to men's admiration for him. His ideals were high, his fidelity to them, though sometimes clouded, was still abiding, his ambition was pure. Yet it can hardly be accident that has turned him into one of the idols of the school who hold, shyly as yet in England, but nakedly in Germany, that might is a token of right, and that the strength and power of the state is an end that at once tests and justifies all means.

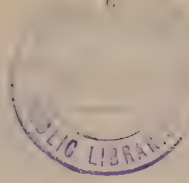
When it is claimed that no English ruler did more than Cromwell to shape the future of the land he governed, we run some risk of straining history only to procure incense for retrograde ideals. Many would contend that Thomas Cromwell, in deciding the future of one of the most powerful standing institutions of the country, exercised a profounder influence than Oliver. Then, if Cromwell did little to shape the future of the church of England, neither did he shape

the future of the parliament of England. On the side of constitutional construction, unwelcome as it may sound, a more important place belongs to the sage and steadfast, though rather unheroic Walpole. The development of the English constitution has in truth proceeded on lines that Cromwell profoundly disliked. The idea of a parliament always sitting and actively reviewing the details of administration was in his sight an intolerable mischief. It was almost the only system against which his supple mind, so indifferent as it was to all constitutional forms, stood inflexible. Yet this, for good or ill, is our system to-day, and the system of the wide host of political communities that have followed our parliamentary model. When it is said again, that it was owing to Cromwell that Nonconformity had time to take such deep root as to defy the storm of the Restoration, do we not overlook the original strength of all those giant puritan fibres from which both the Rebellion and Cromwell himself had sprung? It was not a man, not even such a man as Oliver, it was the same underlying spiritual forces that made the Rebellion, which also held fast against the Restoration. It would hardly be more forced to say that Cromwell was the founder of Nonconformity.

It has been called a common error of our day to ascribe far too much to the designs and the influence of eminent men, of rulers, and of governments. The reproach is just and should impress us. The momentum of past events; the spontaneous impulses of the mass of a nation or a race; the pressure of general

hopes and fears; the new things learned in the onward and diversified motions of 'the great spirit of human knowledge,'—all these have more to do with the progress of the world's affairs than the deliberate views of even the most determined and far-sighted of its individual leaders. Thirty years after the death of the Protector, a more successful revolution came about. The law was made more just, the tribunals were purified, the rights of conscience received at least a partial recognition, the press began to enjoy a freedom for which Milton had made a glorious appeal, but which Cromwell never dared concede. Yet the Declaration of Right and the Toleration Act issued from a stream of ideas and maxims, aims and methods that were not puritan. New tributaries had already swollen the volume and changed the currents of that broad confluence of manners, morals, government, belief, on whose breast Time guides the voyages of mankind. The age of Rationalism with its bright lights and sobering shadows had begun. Some ninety years after 1688, another revolution followed in the England across the Atlantic, and the gulf between Cromwell and Jefferson is measure of the vast distance the minds of men had travelled. With the death of Cromwell, though the free churches remained as nurseries of strong-hearted civil feeling, the brief life of puritan theocracy in England expired. It was a phase of a movement that left an inheritance of many noble thoughts, the memory of a brave struggle for human freedom, and a procession of strenuous master-spirits with Milton and Cromwell at their

head. Political ends miscarry, and the revolutionary leader treads a path of fire. True wisdom is to learn how we may combine sane verdicts on the historic event with a just estimation in the actor of those qualities of high endeavour on which, amid incessant change of formula, direction, fashion, and ideal, the world's best hopes in every age depend.



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